

# IMPERIAL GERMANY

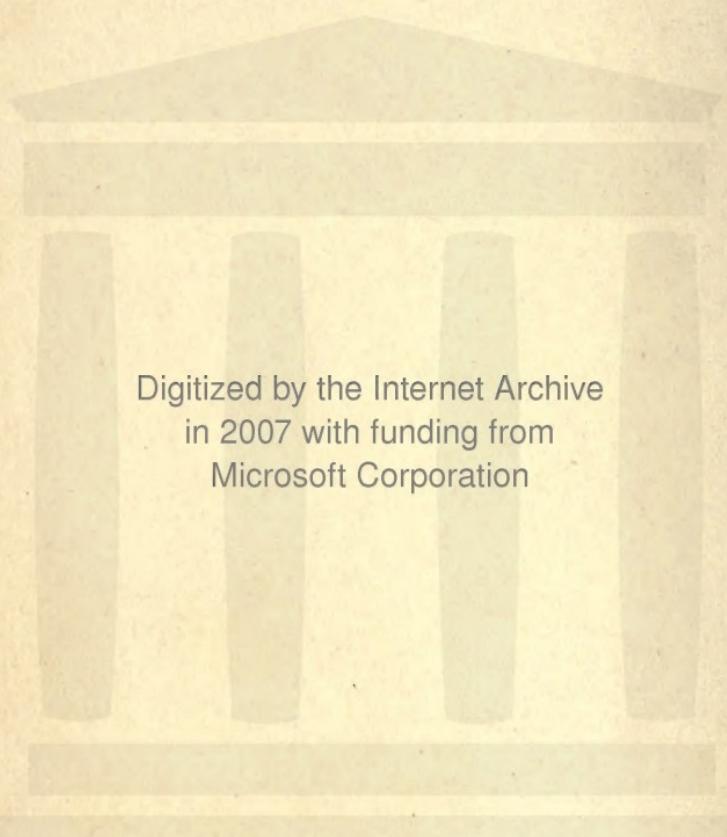


BY  
PRINCE  
BERNHARD VON BULOW



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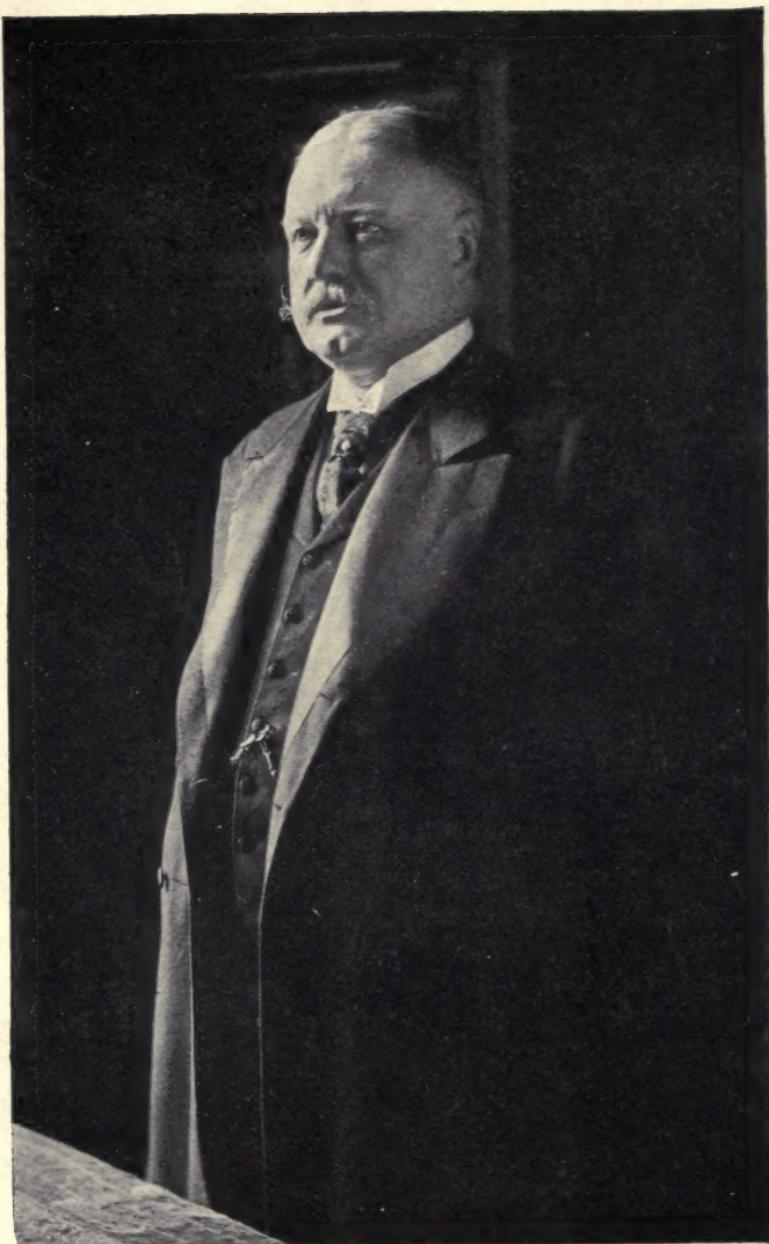




# **IMPERIAL GERMANY**







*Photo : Raupp, Darmstadt*

**PRINCE BERNHARD VON BÜLOW**

# Imperial Germany

BY

PRINCE VON BÜLOW

With a Foreword by  
J. W. HEADLAM

Translation by MARIE A. LEWENZ, M.A.

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## PUBLISHERS' NOTE

THIS is the first book printed in the British Empire by licence of the Comptroller-General of Patents under the Trading with the Enemy (Copyright) Act, 1916.

In the autumn of 1913 the copyright of "Imperial Germany," by Prince von Bülow, was acquired by the House of Cassell for the British Empire. The volume was published in January, 1914. After the outbreak of war a cheap popular edition was issued, and eight impressions were printed.

In the early summer of this year Prince Bülow issued a revised edition in Germany, and negotiations were concluded for the purchase of the British rights in the new matter from a Dutch firm who had acquired them from Prince Bülow's publisher. This transaction became null and void through the passing of the above-mentioned Act, which vested in the Public Trustee the British copyright of all works published in Germany since August 4, 1914. Hence the need for the licence, which was duly granted on October 5, 1916.

More than one-half of the letterpress of the original volume has been re-written, and for the assistance of the historical student and the guidance of the general reader the new passages are indicated in the present volume by brackets.

The Introduction by Prince Bülow is entirely new, and so are the two chapters on Militarism and the chapter on the Social Democrats. The latter part of the Conclusion, in which the author advances the argument that "dogmatic adherence to principles is mischievous," is also new.



## FOREWORD

By J. W. HEADLAM

THIS book, of which Miss Lewenz has made so admirable a translation, is one which is assured of a permanent place in political literature, whether because of the author, the occasion, or the subject; for it is an attempt to explain and justify the policy of the German Empire in the years immediately preceding the outbreak of the present war by the most distinguished of modern German statesmen, and one who was himself responsible for the events which he describes.

Prince Bülow was, from 1897 to 1909, responsible for the control of the Foreign Office of Germany, first as Secretary of State, a post which his father had held before him; afterwards he was appointed to succeed Prince Hohenlohe as Chancellor, and he held the highest position in the German Empire with marked personal distinction for nine years. The twelve years during which he held high office were of supreme importance, for it is during this period that took place that great diplomatic revolution, to which, so far as I know, there is no parallel in the history of Modern Europe.

For this revolution Prince Bülow was more than any other man (except the German Emperor) immediately and personally responsible; for it was the reaction on the relation of European States of the adoption by the Germans of that which they call "Welt-Politik."

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The series of chapters which he devotes to foreign policy is in fact a defence of "Welt-Politik." It is a defence which is necessary; for "Welt-Politik" meant in his eyes the building of the German Fleet, and the German Fleet, with its avowed challenge to the secular policy of Great Britain, meant the estrangement of England and Germany, and as has now been made clear to all, the estrangement from England meant the almost complete isolation of Germany in Europe.

If we are to understand the book, we must recall the circumstances in which it was originally written, circumstances very different from those in which the new edition appears. It belonged to the halcyon years before the storm. It was written as a section in an important general work compiled to commemorate the twenty-fifth anniversary of the accession of the present Emperor; but the end of the quarter of the century of his reign coincided with the centenary of the great war against France, from which modern Germany took its birth, and there breathes throughout the pages the intense national self-confidence, the natural pride belonging to a year of great memories, and one which was to be the last year of the Augustan Age of modern Germany. M. Cambon has shown with admirable skill how greatly the spirit of this double anniversary contributed to arouse in the German nation the passions which were the immediate cause of and found their expression in the present war.

Prince Bülow used the opportunity not for what would have been perhaps the easier and less dangerous course, of writing a general impersonal and historical sketch of the political development of Germany during

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the last twenty-five years; he preferred to make it largely a defence and apology of his own action during the years he had held office, and an exposition of the principles by which he had been guided. It is not often that men who have played a great part in public affairs have themselves given an account of their motives and actions; those who have done so, and among them we may reckon the two greatest of modern statesmen, Richelieu and Bismarck, at least waited until their public career was closed. Richelieu's Memoirs, perhaps to this day the greatest mine of political wisdom, were not published until many years after his death, and, as we all know, Bismarck's Reminiscences, which were dictated to his secretaries during the few years which elapsed between his retirement and his death, were also not published until his death had taken place. Prince Bülow has been, if not wiser, at least bolder, and he has not shrunk from challenging the judgment of his contemporaries by publishing his *apologia* at a time when he might still look forward to many years of activity. The gain, at least, is ours, for in these pages we can read a picture of German policy, I will not say as it appeared to those behind the scenes, but as the most distinguished author of that policy wished that it should seem to have appeared.

There is scarcely a page in which the book does not challenge comparison with Bismarck's Memoirs, just as his own defence of his policy inevitably condemns him to be judged by a comparison with the work of his master. But in such a work, written at such a time, we cannot expect that complete frankness which is

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characteristic both of Richelieu and of Bismarck. In particular, readers will recall how much of their interest and value both these works owe to the clearness with which they explained the difficulties which arose in winning over the assent of the Sovereign to the policy of his minister. This is a topic which is naturally closed to Prince Bülow; but we may easily do him injustice unless we recollect that the Emperor whom he served was neither a Louis XIII. nor a William I., and the final breach which in reality brought about the Prince's resignation, a breach ultimately due to the extraordinary indiscretion of the famous *Daily Telegraph* interview, was, as was well known to his intimates, merely the last of the many embarrassments that the spasmodic and emotional interferences of the Emperor had caused in the management of affairs. It is to the Emperor as much as to the country that many of the wise warnings which the book contains, might well have been, and perhaps were, intended to be addressed.

In its original form the book naturally attracted great attention, both in Germany and in other countries. But while it was freely accessible elsewhere, it was only available in Germany as part of the larger and more expensive work in which it had originally appeared. It was naturally desired to make it more freely accessible to those for whom it had been originally written. But before the time came for this the circumstances had altered. The outbreak of the war threw all that had preceded it into a new light, and it has been largely altered to meet the new conditions. A comparison of the work in its two forms would repay careful study, for it would show the truth that the outbreak of war

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had in fact completely falsified the thesis which was the chief text of the original edition.

When Prince Bülow first wrote in 1913 it was still possible for him to maintain the illusion that he, within the sphere of foreign policy, had left Germany stronger than he found her. This illusion has now been rudely shattered, for the very fact of the outbreak of a war in which Germany found herself opposed by the strongest coalition which has ever been formed since the time of the great coalition before which Napoleon fell, was in itself the strongest condemnation of his diplomatic work. All his skill in dialectic is unable to conceal the obvious facts of history, and it cannot deceive the world as to the complete failure of the system with which his name is associated.

In order to show this it is only necessary to compare the position of Germany in Europe as it was left by Bismarck and as it was, at either the year of the Prince's retirement, or the outbreak of war in 1914. This comparison is quite independent of the success or failure of Germany in the war. The object of diplomacy is to avoid unnecessary conflicts, and above all to ensure that if a war ensues it should be fought under favourable conditions; any success which Germany might have secured in this war would have been won entirely owing to the strength of the German Army, the skill of the generals and the courage of the soldiers; it would have owed nothing to the diplomatic preparation, for the diplomatic preparation had brought it about that Germany entered on the war under circumstances the most unfavourable that could be conceived; and this is the result of Prince Bülow's work.

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When Prince Bismarck retired twenty years after the establishment of the Empire, he left his country, as it seemed, fully secured from any external attack. The basis of its position was the close alliance with Austria; into this alliance Italy had been brought; and these three Powers together were sufficient to give Germany an almost assured success in any Continental struggle. But this was not sufficient. In the face of the greatest difficulties he had succeeded in maintaining co-operation with Russia, and the position in the Balkans was further secured by an alliance with Roumania. In addition to this, England, though standing aloof from Continental affairs, was, notwithstanding occasional friction arising from the beginnings of German Colonial enterprise, very friendly to the Triple Alliance. Bismarck, in fact, had always seen to it that Colonial enterprise should never be pursued beyond that point which would throw England into definite opposition. Everything had been done to obtain for the new Empire a permanent position of security.

If we pass over twenty years, what do we find? The alliance with Austria indeed continues; everything else is changed. The lapse of the Reinsurance treaty with Russia had at once been followed by the establishment of that alliance between Russia and France which had been prophesied ever since 1870, and which it was the chief effort of Bismarck to avoid. France, therefore, was no longer isolated. While preserving her general distrust and aloofness from Germany, she was able once more, with full confidence, to take her place in the councils of the European Powers. For this, Prince Bülow himself shares no responsibility. But this was

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not all. Even more important was the changed position of England. Instead of being almost a passive partner in the Triple Alliance, she had now become an active and energetic friend of the opposing union. This changed attitude of England had inevitably affected the position of Italy. The relations of Italy to Austria and Germany and her position in the Triple Alliance have been the subject of constant controversy and discussion during the last ten years. From all this there emerges one fundamental truth, that in a European war it would be impossible for Italy to take her place in opposition to the two liberal and maritime Powers of the West. Though many years were to elapse before the crisis came, the events of 1904-5 had in reality destroyed the Triple Alliance. From that time onwards Germany could no longer depend on Italian support, and as Prince Bülow himself says, the traditional relations of Italy and Austria were such that they must be either allies or enemies. To set off against this, there was nothing except the friendship with Turkey. The net result was that Germany, instead of enjoying full and complete security, had been brought into a position of almost complete isolation.

And if the alliance with Austria continued, the isolation of Germany had caused it to change its character. Nothing is more remarkable in recent events than the apparent helplessness shown by Germany when Austria undertook moves in the Balkans, which obviously must have been inconvenient to her ally. The action of Count d'Aehrenthal in 1909 was, in fact, almost an insult to Germany. There can be little doubt now that he proceeded

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to the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina without consulting Germany, and although he knew that by doing so he would place her in an extremely difficult position as regards Turkey. One of the most plausible explanations of his action, indeed, was that he wished, by a definite and dramatic stroke, to establish Austrian independence and to repudiate the idea that Austria was in any way under German tutelage or patronage. He was able to do this because the continuance of the alliance with Austria had now become absolutely necessary to Germany; it was the only hold that she had left. This is shown by the subsequent course of the crisis. Germany had been treated with scant consideration; the German Government disapproved of the manner in which the annexation was carried through. And yet, as events show, Germany was forced against her better judgment to give her full and complete support to Austria, and thereby to bring herself into the danger of an acute diplomatic conflict with England, France and Russia. Her motives for this, which were publicly avowed at the time, were sufficient; Germany could no longer exist if Austria were in any way weakened, or if Austrian confidence in German support was undermined. She had, therefore, to pledge her support in a conflict which was not her own, and in a manner which called forth strong protests in all the independent German papers. Future historians will not confirm the self-complacent account of this affair given by the author.

The contrast speaks for itself, and it is sufficient comment on the claims made by Bülow that he was following a Bismarckian policy. In truth, though his

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policy was in appearance Bismarckian, in its essence it was just the reverse. The Nelson touch is not easy to imitate. Bismarckian may be as far removed from Bismarck as Hellenism from Hellas. As in all copies, it is the appearance, the mannerism, the faults, the excesses, which are most easily adopted.

What was the essence of Bismarck's policy, i.e. the system of Bismarck's old age, with which at the moment we are alone concerned? Its essential basis was that it was adapted for a period of quiescence; it was that suited to a state which desired nothing but the maintenance of the *status quo*. All is summed up in the words so often quoted, that Germany was a "satiated State." The whole object of Bismarck in his later years was so to arrange matters that Germany might be free from the danger of attack by a hostile coalition. From Germany no disturbance of the peace need be feared, for Germany had nothing which she desired, and from Germany, therefore, the other nations had nothing to fear. But it resulted from this that Germany was able to recognise, and within limits to assist the attainment of the objects of the ambition of every other State. Prince Bülow illustrates this in a saying which he quotes from Bismarck: "In Serbia I am an Austrian, in Bulgaria I am Russian, in Egypt I am English." It was just for this reason that all countries in Europe, not only Austria, but also Russia and England, were willing to acquiesce in German predominance and in Bismarck's position as general referee in all European complications. Nothing is so striking in his later years as the way in which statesmen of all other countries were willing to go to him

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for assistance and advice. They could do so because they knew that as Germany was not at the time an aggressive State, he could look with something of an impartial eye on the ambitions of the others.

But what had this Germany of Bismarck to do with the Germany of the new century? Germany was no longer a satiated State. It had become an ambitious nation, full of intense claims for increased power and additional territory. Germany might, indeed, remain Austrian in Serbia, but she was no longer Russian in Bulgaria, she was no longer English in Egypt. We all know how much England depended on German support during the critical years when her position in Egypt was being established. Now we have come to a time when Germany herself has her own ambitions in the East, and when she is beginning to regard it as her mission eventually to expel England from Egypt, and by an alliance with Turkey to step herself into the position thus evacuated.

The new ambitions required a new system of foreign policy; the situation had again become such as it was when the Prussia of the 'sixties was asserting herself in Europe. If he wanted to imitate Bismarck, it is to the first period of his active manhood that Bülow should have gone. Had he done so he would not have had to bear on his shoulders the responsibility for the troubles and sorrows which have come on Germany.

It is not unfair to suggest that German policy was in the last resort governed by a phrase. Can we imagine Bismarck talking about "Welt-Politik"? We can easily imagine him setting to work to further German power outside Europe; we can imagine the care

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with which he would have prepared the ground, the foresight with which he would have arranged his alliances, the strict reserve and limitations that he would have placed on his aims, the ruthlessness with which he would have crushed popular clamour for all accessions which lay outside the field that he had marked out for himself, the scorn with which he would have treated the professors and journalists who tried to divert the aims outside those that he had laid down. Prussia, like every State that has achieved great things in the world, has grown by doing one thing, and fighting one enemy, at a time. Bismarck did not attempt to unify Germany till he had conquered North Germany, and before the conquest came the Customs Union. He did not attack Austria till he was fully assured of the alliance of Italy, and if need was of Hungary, as well as of the benevolent neutrality of France. He would not have challenged England by the building of the fleet unless he was assured of the good will of Russia, nor would he have "let loose Austria on Serbia" unless he knew that England and France would stand aloof. He would have seen that to talk of "*Welt-Politik*" was merely to throw out a gratuitous challenge and to alarm every nation on earth.

The fatal fault of Germany is that during the last twenty years she has pursued an ambitious policy at the same time in every quarter of the globe—on the Atlantic, in Africa, in the Near East and in the Pacific. Her Pacific policy entangled her with Japan, and she lost by her interference in 1897 the good will which she had previously acquired. In Morocco she stirred up again the slumbering embers of French hostility; her

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Atlantic policy brought her into conflict with England; her Eastern with Russia. Entering on the untravelled and uncharted stage of world policy, she brought it about that she had no friend or ally except Austria, the only Great Power of Europe whose strength and ambitions are entirely confined to the Continent. It is this divergence of effort which ruined German foreign policy, as it is the divided military effort which is destroying Germany in the war. For war is the continuation of policy, and the dilemma in which the German High Command is entangled when it has to fight on three fronts, is merely the continuation of the burden left by an ambitious and uncontrolled foreign policy.

We know that there were in Germany two schools of thought, of which one was primarily interested in the Balkans, the other in the development of sea power. Both used their influence on the Government. The situation was not an easy one, but it should have been foreseen that disaster would come if the Government were not strong enough to concentrate its efforts on one or the other and to insist that success could only be obtained on this condition.

From what little we know of the internal conditions, we may probably say that Prince Bülow was chiefly interested in the oceanic development. Herr von Kiderlin Waechter, who at the end of his period of office was becoming one of the most influential of German statesmen, was in favour of the Eastern sphere, as of course was Marschall von Bieberstein. But there was no man strong enough to insist on the necessary limitation and concentration. The man who ought to have done so, the only man who had the necessary authority, the

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Emperor, was above all others responsible for the neglect of this elementary precaution.

No passage in this book is more instructive than that in which the author recounts a conversation with Baron Marschall von Bieberstein, in which that distinguished diplomatist said : "If despite Damascus and Tangiers we give up Morocco, with one blow we lose our position in Turkey, and with it the advantages and prospects that we have gained by our laborious work of years." What this shows is that the work that was being done in Turkey was of such a kind that it could not be brought to a successful conclusion unless it was for the time made the sole and governing line of development.

But how could this be reconciled with the policy which allowed the Emperor to go to Tangiers, an act for which Prince Bülow claims full responsibility? For that was naturally interpreted by the nation as the putting forward of a claim to a share in Morocco. They could not understand a policy which pledged the whole strength of Germany, but not for the acquisition of territory and power. All that the blow, in fact, achieved was to cement the alliance between England and France.

The more closely we examine the history of the present century the clearer it becomes that all turns on the relations of Germany and England, and these are conditioned entirely by the new situation created by the building of the German fleet. Most German writers dealing with these matters have chosen to forget that this struggle, at first diplomatic and afterwards mili-

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tary, was entirely caused by their own acts. In this Prince Bülow is juster; he knows better; he does not attempt to obscure the motives of the change which he had brought about by his naval policy; he sees and acknowledges that English opposition was more moderate in its form than he had any right to expect. He discusses these matters with a sanity and reasonableness which stand in marked contrast to nearly all that comes to us from Germany, whether in the official pronouncements of the Government or in the scarcely more fantastic utterances of the leaders in politics and letters. We can be grateful to him that he at any rate does not cease to write as a gentleman and man of the world.

But the recognition of this will not obscure the essential weakness and fallacies which run through his exposition. He takes credit to himself for having passed safely through the critical years when the fleet was in the process of creation. His self-congratulation is premature; he affected to believe that the suspicions and just apprehension aroused by his naval policy would cease when the fleet was completed, and that England could be either cajoled or frightened into an alliance. In the same way he seems to have thought that his theatrical and quite unnecessary ultimatum to Russia in 1909 would be the beginnings of a new and more cordial understanding. In both cases his thought was on the surface of things. The fundamental conflict of interest could not in either case be so easily painted over. An alliance with Russia could only be secured by the surrender of their forward policy in the Balkans, to which Germany had been irrevocably committed by the words and acts of the

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Emperor; an understanding with England could only be attained by the genuine repudiation of those aspirations for predominance with which Germany was so full. It seems to have been his belief that he could lure England to sleep or that she would shrink from the danger of a conflict. As England had neglected to strike when she could do so with ease, he believed that she would be willing to subordinate herself to German ambitions. The truth rather is that England was never for a moment blinded; the nation as a whole saw and judged truly the trouble that was coming; yet with full deliberation she refused to have recourse to a preventive war. The passages which he and other German writers quote from speeches and newspapers are really evidence, not that England was meditating an attack, but that the possibility of an attack had been recognised, had been considered, and was in fact rejected; but this did not mean that she was ignorant of what was going on; it only meant that she was collecting her resources for defending herself and her allies if at any time the anticipated attack came.

It is incomprehensible that he did not see that the mere existence of the German war fleet was a permanent menace, not to any secondary interests of England, but to the very foundation of her national existence. May we not rather take it that the view that he professes to take was, in the first edition, assumed rather with the view of hiding the real truth from England, and that it was meant to remind the Germans that the time was not yet come to disclose the full meaning of the challenge to England.

In fact, the Germans took every step to warn her.

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The policy which he would have pursued, not perhaps a very honourable one, required above all things a discreet silence. This was the last thing of which Germany was capable. Side by side with his confession that the full development of his naval schemes required that no unnecessary offence should be given to England until Germany was ready, we must read the candid avowal of Count Reventlow that the great mistake made by the Germans was to talk too much of all that they might do in the Near East before the time came to do it.

"It had an unfavourable effect and created difficulties, that in Germany itself the object and the importance of the Bagdad railroad was proclaimed to the world to some extent in an incorrect and in a very exaggerated manner. As early as the beginning of the new century people talked openly with a triumph which far anticipated events, of the railway which would threaten India and render possible a Turkish invasion of Egypt. A German war station would arise on the Persian Gulf and the superfluous German population would be settled in Mesopotamia. In this direction there were at that time made among us great mistakes which were quite unnecessary. *The more quietly the Bagdad Railway was built, the better.* The baseless talk of German settlements in Mesopotamia and even in Asia Minor tended, moreover, to sow among the Turks a distrust of German intentions, which was, in fact, quite unjustified. On the other hand, it was certainly right that it would be possible, after the net of railways had been completed, to make of Turkey a dangerous menace against Egypt and India, *but that sort of thing ought not to have been*

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*said so long as Great Britain still was in a position to hinder and to delay the building of the railway.”<sup>1</sup>*

Prince Bülow again and again prides himself on his success in building the fleet, and implies that by that he has added greatly to the strength of Germany. Let us consider these things purely as a balance-sheet of loss and gain according to the undiluted principles of “Macht-Politik.” Let us make a profit and loss account. On the one side we have a great asset, the German fleet; no one will deny the energy with which its creation was carried out, or the courage and skill of the men by whom it was manned; it would be foolish to ignore the great incentive to vigorous action which the possession of a fleet spread throughout the German nation. But what have we on the other side? How does the debit account look? How did it affect the position of Germany in Europe? Against the possession of the fleet, we have the estrangement from England, resulting as has been shown in the virtual alliance of England, France and Russia, the inevitable separation of Italy from the Triple Alliance, the consequent complete reliance of Germany upon Austria. We have therefore a Germany almost isolated in Europe, and one which had to a greater extent than is generally recognised forfeited the power of determining her own policy. This in peace; and in war the whole energy of the British nation directed against Germany in every part of the globe. It is a great price that they have paid. If the history of the last fifteen years had to be played over again, would they choose the path which in obedience to Prince Bülow and the Emperor they have followed?

<sup>1</sup> Reventlow, “Deutschlands Auswärtige Politik,” 3rd Edition, p. 340.

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The book is not only an account of the author's own actions; it is the exposition of a system of policy and a theory of international relations. It is a system and a theory which he inherited from Bismarck, and which Bismarck had learned from what was in fact the situation in Europe during the days when he served his diplomatic apprenticeship. It is a system founded on a careful balancing of one State against another, the subtle play of hostile alliances, beneath which lies the profound conviction that every State is playing entirely for its own hand, that there can be no confidence in the honour or honesty of either friend or foe, a system under which a State has to be as much on its guard against deception by professed friends as opposition by open enemies. There is a German phrase very characteristic of this attitude of mind, which more than once recurs in the book. Speaking of the prospects of an alliance with England, Prince Bülow explains that he was on his guard against being made a "cat's-paw," or as the German has it, being used "*die Kastanien aus dem Feuer zu pflucken.*" The assumption is that in any alliance which was made England would only be anxious to use her ally for her own purposes, and then cast her aside when the needs of the moment were over and her usefulness had been fulfilled. We are justified in assuming that this is the attitude which he himself also would have considered natural to take towards any ally of Germany, for men judge others by themselves.

From this system one thing was completely absent—the conception of loyal and permanent co-operation between the European States. It is noticeable that he

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does not think it worth while to devote even a passing word to such matters as the Hague Conference, proposals for disarmament, suggestions for arbitration. We know that, in fact, it was the continued opposition of Germany at a time when Prince Bülow was Chancellor which was responsible for the failure of many of the suggestions made at the Hague Conference for ameliorating the relations of States to one another, and we know also with what persistence he, as well as his successors, combated the proposals for any agreement as to armaments. In truth, all conceptions of this kind are completely foreign to the principles of policy as most of his school regard them ; but may we not also say that this is evidence of his complete failure to understand the newer impulses which were arising in Europe ?

It is easy enough to ridicule the suggestions which have been made during recent years for replacing the constant rivalry between States by a more permanent system of co-operation. Many of them have shown all the faults of the amateur and the idealist, but no one who was not blind to the deeper meaning of the times in which he lived could doubt that these proposals were the premonitory symptoms which under favourable circumstances might lead, and, in fact, were leading, to a fundamental alteration in the whole scheme of international relations. This was seen by the statesmen of every country in Europe, except by those of Germany. Germany alone resolutely turned her face to the past, and this at a time when Prince Bülow was the chief director of her policy.

It was, indeed, his deliberate determination and desire, and he has devoted the whole book to explain-

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ing and justifying this, that the world position of Germany should be built up and maintained purely by her naval power, just as her Continental position had been built up and maintained by the army. But was this necessary? Surely there had been sufficient experience during the twenty years preceding his term of office to show that Germany was strong enough to attain all that she professed to desire without resort to arms or to threat of arms. To what does Germany owe the position which she had attained in the partition of Africa? Surely it is the adoption of the principle that the partition of Africa should be arranged by peaceful bargaining between the nations, and that the government of that continent should be determined by the rules laid down in association by the concert of Europe as the representative of the civilised States of the world. There had been, as he himself acknowledges, no threat to German power beyond the seas, coming whether from England or any other country. No greater mistake could be made than to suppose that a great war fleet was necessary to protect German commerce and foreign positions. For this purpose Germany's position on the Continent of Europe was sufficient.

That lesson has been learned now. It is not on battles to be fought in the North Sea or the Atlantic that the recovery of the German Colonies depends; it is on the fighting in Poland, in France, and in Flanders. A nation as strong as Germany can always, when necessary, attain her will in these distant and less essential objects, by the general pressure which her wealth and her power enables her to use. Bismarck saw this; nations in

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modern times are so closely interdependent upon one another that the strong, constant and deliberate opposition of any one can always place any other in a position of serious embarrassment. If there were opposition at any time to the extension of German influence in Africa, Bismarck was always able to overcome it by the methods he so well knew how to use, whether by some closer co-operation with Russia, some unforeseen obstacle thrown in the way of the British occupation in Egypt, some encouragement to France to embark on schemes of extension inconvenient to England. This is how a master of diplomacy acted. He got the greatest results with the smallest effort. Bülow's principle seems to have been to use the greatest effort and to obtain no results; but then, at least, if not for him we may say for the Emperor and the people, the effort, the noise, the commotion, was in itself an object to be desired. They were all apt to mistake the noise for the reality, and they were happy that the voice of Germany should be heard, even though the unnecessary vehemence of their language interfered with the object which they professed to desiderate.

The book throws little light on the immediate origins of the war. As I have pointed out elsewhere,<sup>1</sup> what Prince Bülow says is sufficient to dissociate him completely from the views now proclaimed by the German Government and current among the German people. From him we have nothing to support the conception of a war forced upon Germany by a deliberate conspiracy among jealous enemies. In particular there is not a word to suggest that the war was the result of English

<sup>1</sup> *The Nineteenth Century and After*, August, 1916.

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intrigues and machinations. The picture we have of England here is rather of a nation which had lost the opportunity which was offered to her of attacking Germany at a time when the fleet was still so weak as to make an attack dangerous. In words which will not quickly be forgotten, he again and again intimates that the right policy for England would, in fact, have been at an earlier period to have crippled Germany before the navy had been completed. In September, 1914, he says in a paragraph which has been added to the later editions of his book, "A Berlin paper wrote that England wished to make us small before we had got too big, but had allowed the right moment to pass," and again, "When in the winter 1909 a speaker in the English Parliament laid stress on the fact that England would not have to push on her naval preparations with such feverish activity if it had prevented the rise of the German naval power ten years before, he gave expression to an idea which was correct from the point of view of a policy of power."

But if England had missed the opportunity in the past, he does not suggest that she was anxious to make another similar opportunity. He speaks of England having entered upon the war only when it was clear that there was no longer any prospect of peace, and of having checked the chauvinistic desires of France. It was not, then, England who was responsible for the war, nor does he suggest that it was France or Russia. If we are to penetrate his deeper thought, we should probably find that he attributed it to the blunder of the men who sat in the place which he himself had once filled. We have more than one serious warning against the

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dangers which mistaken views of foreign policy and tactless diplomacy may bring upon a country. Are we not to interpret this as veiled criticisms of German statesmanship? It is surely from no mere oversight that his successor is not once even named; that there comes from Prince Bülow no single expression of approval of his actions or of support and sympathy for him in the manifold difficulties by which he is surrounded, and it may also be noted that such references as we find to the Emperor, while appreciative of the work which he does to maintain the national spirit of the people, are quite silent as to his wisdom in the subtler matters of statesmanship.

The suggestions which the book contains for terms of peace, slight as they are, show that when this new edition was published he was still under the illusion of the prospect of a German victory which would enable Germany to dictate her terms to the Allies. They are useful as showing what, in the opinion of one of the most moderate and conciliatory of men, a German victory would mean—an extension of German territory on the West, which would be the foundation for a further development of German sea power in rivalry to England; the rectification of the French frontier, which would confirm the strategical superiority which Germany had secured by the annexation of Metz; and on the East (and this is the most interesting and original of his points) a great diminution of Russian territory, with the ultimate object of transferring the whole of South-Western Russia, including Odessa, to the German Powers, as well as the annexation to Ger-

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many of the districts bordering on East Prussia. What would be the result of these changes? It would be to place Germany in a position in which, owing both to the actual extension of territory and the favourable strategical nature of the new frontiers, she would be free from any danger of attack, whether by a single State or by a coalition. In this, at least, he thinks like the present Chancellor, and would have Germany emerge from the war so strengthened as to be able to impose for all time her will upon Europe.

It is not only in his conception of international relations that the influence of Bismarck is predominant, but we see it also in his attitude on home affairs. No part of the book shows the literary ability and facility which are so characteristic of the author so well as the chapters dealing with home policy. To English readers, as well as to German, the analysis of the difficulties of carrying on a Government through a parliament, but without parliamentary government, is most instructive. It is impossible, however, not to notice a fundamental fallacy very characteristic of the author. With almost wearisome reiteration Prince Bülow speaks of the incapacity both of the German people and of the parliamentary parties, and their failure when brought before practical tests. It seems to have escaped his observation that this, together with the want of interest in politics, which he deplores, is more probably to be attributed to the system of government than to the innate incapacity of the German nation. Surely the proper remedy for it would be to give to the nation and the parties a share in the responsibilities of administra-

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tion. The whole system of Bülow's policy was, however, determined by the refusal to do this, and he does not see that the political education of a nation can only proceed by throwing practical responsibility upon it. But because Bismarck had preferred to keep the full control of the whole government of the country in his own hands, Bülow still followed tamely in his footsteps; he had not the real insight, nor had he the courage to recognise that the time had come for a further step in German political development, and that if the empire had been successfully founded and if it had passed successfully through the critical first years of its existence, the time had come when the people themselves could with safety be encouraged to take more share in the management of their own affairs. In this, just as in his foreign policy, his eyes remained always fixed upon the past, and he was without the great qualities which enable a statesman to foresee, to accept and to adopt those new developments, the necessity of which was apparent to many men of far less experience and ability than himself. The failure to guide the German nation to the powers of self-government goes side by side with the failure to accept the principle of co-operation rather than of enmity between the European states.

It was not always easy to defend this system against the criticism of the advanced Liberals, the Centre and the Socialists, and in times of stress he readily had recourse to a weapon which Bismarck had frequently used with marked success, the appeal to national feeling.

This was a dangerous weapon, one which, normally,

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should be and is the last resort in a supreme crisis, but in modern Germany it has been erected into a permanent system, and Bülow himself explains how "the idea of the nation may be used to move, to unite and to separate parties." It is noticeable that the word "separate" has disappeared in the last edition, for in truth the war has shown how ill-founded was the suggestion that criticism of and opposition to the Government was necessarily based on want of patriotism. But the repeated use of this weapon had serious results; it necessitated a constant appeal to national feeling, which in its turn produced an exaggerated and self-conscious nationalism. The German nation was taught to believe that it was surrounded by internal and external enemies, that they must be always on their guard. The normal and healthy criticism which every government in every nation requires was deliberately attributed to a want of patriotism, and it was impressed upon every individual citizen that it was his duty constantly, on occasions of even minor importance, to vociferate his loyalty to the national idea. In every internal crisis the Government would make it appear that the criticism of the established institutions would imperil the maintenance of the naval and military forces, which were the only protection of the nation against its jealous enemies from outside.

A strained and artificial loyalty was the result. This reacted again on foreign policy. The nation was taught to be ready to take offence, to attribute the normal opposition which every nation has to encounter, to some deep-rooted desire on the part of

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other peoples to humiliate and injure the Fatherland. Patriotism was not regarded as the normal subconscious basis of all political thought and action, but it was placed in the position of an emotion which must find constant and noisy expression. We may, in fact, say that the whole apparatus of national defence was used, not only for its proper purpose, but as a means of preventing encroachments or innovations in the forms of internal government, and it is to this more than anything else that we must attribute that exaggerated self-consciousness which has for long made Germany the danger spot in Europe.

Prince Bülow while in office was subject to much unsympathetic criticism from this country; both what he did and what he said often left the impression of disingenuousness, and not all his ability and personal charm was able to create any feeling of confidence. A careful study of this book, while it completely confirms the distrust with which his attitude towards England was regarded, will also suggest that if he at times attempted to deceive others, he more often deceived only himself. While we may enjoy the wealth of illustrations with which it abounds and the literary skill with which he brings matters of practical politics into the light of great ideas, we often seem to miss the firm hold of reality, and much that he says is merely repetition in a more delicate form of the ideas and fallacies common in modern Germany. It is the book of a man who is receptive rather than originating, and as I read it there often comes to my mind the observation of one who had exceptional opportunities of observing him at work: "Prince

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von Bülow is a man who speaks much and says little."

The task which he set himself was one beyond his powers. He undertook to change the current of world history—on the one hand to keep back the political evolution of Germany at home, and on the other to use the vital forces of his country in order to overthrow the long-established predominance of England at sea. It was a great ambition, but it was one to which his will and energy were unequal. He was no Chatham who could compel the Sovereign and his country to obedience to himself; he was no Bismarck to make the other states of Europe move in conformity to his wishes. He aroused both at home and abroad forces which he was unable to control; the national spirit which he had helped to create assumed shapes very dangerous to the success of his policy, but he was unable to govern the spirits which he had called up; he forced the other states of Europe into a coalition very unfavourable to Germany, and he found himself unable to dissolve it; and at the critical moment he was driven into obscurity by the master whom he had attempted to serve even against himself.

J. W. HEADLAM

*London,*

*October 22nd, 1916.*

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## INTRODUCTION<sup>1</sup>

WHEN, two years ago, I penned a political introduction to the collective work "Deutschland unter Kaiser Wilhelm II." ("Germany under the Emperor William II."), the German Empire could look back upon decades of peaceful development, during which vigorous progress had been made in many fields. It seemed as though long years of peace still lay before us. No doubt the situation in world politics, and particularly in European politics, had for a long time presented those unsolved problems to which, during my term of office, I had devoted much thought and labour, and which I touched upon in the sketch on foreign policy that I subsequently published.

Many a time, owing to the accumulation of conflicting interests among rival European States, the danger of a violent explosion had been imminent. Both as regards the point at issue and the grouping of the Powers, the political situation abroad at the time of the Bosnian crisis in 1908-9 was very similar to that which gave rise to the present World War. On that occasion diplomacy succeeded in averting the impending danger. There seemed every reason to hope that in the future too the thought of the horror and havoc that a European war must entail would lead responsible statesmen to find a final and peaceful solution, even in the case of the gravest differences. This hope has

<sup>1</sup> New to this edition.

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proved to be vain. The renewed quarrel between Austria and Serbia, which could not be localised, became a European conflict and led to hostilities between the two great groups of the Powers, groups which had formed in the course of modern times owing to conflicting interests in the spheres of European and world politics.

When, two years ago, I expressed the opinion that of all his innate aptitudes the German's military qualities were the most admirable, I little thought that it would fall to my lot to behold the German people in their old-time splendour of battle and victory. In each of the three great wars of the last century the Prussians and the Germans appeared before the world as a nation of heroes. But the deeds wrought in those days, the strategy and tactics when, in accordance with the weapons of those times, it was possible to achieve decisive results in a few great battles, pale into insignificance beside the marvellous contempt of death and the iron resolution that the German nation in arms displays in the present.

In this terrible war our Emperor has placed himself at the head of the nation with that devotion to duty and that fearlessness which are the traditional heritage of the Hohenzollerns; his personality has, in the course of the war, impressed itself more and more deeply upon the consciousness of the people, and the monarchic principle is consequently more firmly rooted in their hearts. From the incomparable corps of German officers in this war too, men of high talent have emerged who can lead the army to victory. With gratitude and admiration the whole of Germany bows down before that

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great and unassuming general, Hindenburg, the conqueror of the giant armies of Russia. Nevertheless, what is, and always will be, the sublimest manifestation of these times is the heroism of the common German soldier who, torn from peaceful occupations, from wife and children, month after month loyally pursues his hard and bloody task for the good of his fatherland; no matter whether he has to face for days the devastating fire of the French guns, whether he has to charge the enemy's lines under a hail of bullets, or to fight hand to hand with bayonet, butt and bomb.

When from this unequal struggle, in which no single enemy has refrained from attack, Germany at last emerges victorious and with augmented strength, our chiefest thanks will be due to those brave men, each one of whom, irrespective of class and education, was animated by the resolve to die rather than to yield. There is undoubted justification for the suggestion that is said to have been made, that the only fitting memorial of victory in this war must be a figure representing a simple German rifleman.

No war in the past history of Germany has called forth anything like such universal heroism, nor did any past war ever entail such terrible sacrifices: economic sacrifices, more, much more grievous sacrifices of cherished human lives, sacrifices, too, of connections, possibilities and values. It goes without saying that the main object of the war must be to obtain for Germany not only adequate compensation, but also guarantees which prevent any future war under the same, or similar, unfavourable conditions.

As in Germany, so also in France and in England,

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and to a certain extent even in Russia, as well as in Italy, this World War has thrust party differences at home into the background and has called forth a unanimity which we call *Burgfrieden* and the French name sentimentally *l'union sacrée*.

The reverse side of this inner harmony is that this war, which all the nations involved wage with passionate zeal, will, as far as human knowledge can foretell, bequeath a legacy of violently intensified animosity. For many a day hatred and the desire for revenge will influence international relations. It would be a grave and irreparable blunder to pursue illusions in this respect and to attempt to preserve sympathies, however well justified their past existence may have been, at a time at which the war is the paramount and sole determining factor. All wars, and especially one such as this, must of necessity interrupt the development of relations between the belligerent nations for a long time to come. The healing influence of time is needed, and skilled and vigorous diplomacy as well, before normal relations, based on mutual confidence, can be resumed, even in cases where palpable community of interests with the enemy exists. Moral victories will be difficult of achievement among the ruins which this war will leave in its wake.

At the present time the events of 1866 are often instanced, and the development of friendship and the alliance between Germany and Austria which came about a short time later; but there is no shadow of justification for assuming that anything similar could occur in the case of a single one of our enemies. With none of them are we united by links forged by the past history of a

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thousand years, during which we formed one nation; with none of them do we share the common heritage of German language, culture, literature, art and customs. These are powerful factors that cannot be replaced by a few similar interests and sympathetic understanding extended to an alien civilisation.

We must also not forget the fact that in 1866 Schleswig-Holstein, Hanover, the Province of Hesse, Nassau and Frankfurt-on-the-Main were incorporated in Prussia, and at the same time solid foundations were laid for the bridge over the Main. In 1871 we won Alsace, Lorraine, Strasburg and Metz. Nor is there any analogy with the Seven Years' War which was waged at a time when the preliminary conditions, international relations, political circumstances, methods of warfare and prospects all differed from those of the present day.

This war is a national war, not only for us Germans, but equally for the English, the French and the most influential section of the Russian people. The national hatred, which has been roused by the war and confirmed by bloodshed, will persist after the struggle is concluded, until national passions receive an impetus in a new direction. Germany must realise to-day that unless quite new and, indeed, improbable situations are created by this war, the feelings of bitter resentment engendered in France, England and Russia will persist after peace has been made. These considerations must be decisive in determining the conditions of peace, and that in two respects. Germany will in future require protection against hostility and desires for revenge, both old and new, in the West, the East and beyond the Channel; such protec-

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tion can only be found in the increase of her own power. Our enemies will also strengthen their armaments on land and sea. We must see to it that our frontiers and shores are strengthened and rendered less easy of attack than at the beginning of this war; not in furtherance of that desire for world dominion with which we are falsely credited, but for the maintenance of our present position. The outcome of the war must be a positive, not a negative one. To prevent our annihilation, loss of territory or dismemberment, to ensure that we be not bled to the last farthing, that is not the point; it is a question of definite gain in the form of real security and guarantees, as an indemnity for hitherto unheard-of labours and suffering, and also as a pledge for the future. In view of the ill-feeling against us which this war is bound to bring in its train, the mere restoration of the *status quo ante bellum* would mean for Germany not gain, but loss. Only if our power, political, economic and military, emerges from this war so strengthened that it considerably outweighs the feelings of enmity that have been aroused, shall we be able to assert with a clear conscience that our position in the world has been bettered by the war.

On the other hand, it is necessary to maintain and restore sympathies and to strengthen connections with such States as have not crossed swords with Germany in this war, whether or no the propaganda of the enemy Press and of enemy agitators has succeeded during the war in rousing a feeling of hostility to us in the population of those States. In this case political necessity must disregard national predilections and prejudices, even such as are well founded. Seeing that

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Germany must, by the increase of her power, be placed in a position to support old enmities which have been infinitely intensified and exacerbated by this war, it would be unwise not to attach importance to the friendship of those who did not join the ranks of her enemies in the course of the war. It will be a matter not only of resolute will, but also of diplomatic skill to attain the one goal without endangering the other.

In expectation of further peaceful development, during which time must needs work for the Germans, I deemed it desirable two years ago to speak of foreign affairs with great reserve. I made a point of refraining from any decisive utterance, and to the best of my ability I kept my personal opinions in the background. It goes without saying that at the present time I can be more explicit on this subject. However, I may add that in the field of foreign politics I see no reason to modify anything fundamental in my conception of the attitude of other States toward the German Empire. In all essentials events have corroborated what I said.

The irreconcilability of France has been only too clearly manifested. If in 1913 I earned the reproach in some quarters that there was a note of grey monotony in my sketch of our relations with England, to-day it must be conceded that the only thing in my account that has not been confirmed by new facts was the hope that Anglo-German relations would continue to develop peacefully along lines of mutual trust. At that date there was good foundation for a favourable forecast regarding the relations between Germany and Russia, for but a few years previously they had come safely through the test of the Bosnian crisis. On

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the other hand, a certain coolness which had existed between the two States since 1878, and which was emphasised by the conclusion of the Dual Alliance in 1890, continued to prevail. Meanwhile, in the East many new points of difference had arisen between Austria-Hungary and Russia, as a result of the two Balkan wars: the war between Turkey and the Bulgarians, Serbians and Greeks, and the subsequent war between these Balkan peoples.

From the time when the Dual Alliance was formed, when the Empire of the Tsar joined the group of Powers hostile to us—that is to say for the space of a quarter of a century—Russo-German relations have always been dependent on the manner in which the recurring differences and conflicting interests of Austria-Hungary and Russia were handled; moreover, this applies not only to the points at issue, but also to the personality of those who carried on the negotiations. The danger that in the event of a European war we might find Russia on the side of our opponents has existed for many years; indeed, ever since the foundation of the Empire. It was clear-sighted recognition of this peril which led Bismarck to conclude the Reinsurance Treaty. As I say, I believe that, on the whole, I am entitled to uphold my account of foreign politics in spite of and because of the war.

The enemies of the German people speak and write with such lack of understanding of our “militarism,” which is the foundation of our State and the guarantee of our future, that I have been moved to discuss shortly the historical and political importance of the army in Germany.

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In the treatment of home politics I have gladly availed myself of the occasion to omit certain passages which dealt with old quarrels and differences. I also welcome the opportunity of expressing my appreciation of the new state of affairs which Social Democracy created by falling into line at the outbreak of war. It was on points of national policy in particular, and almost exclusively on those points, that I joined issue with Social Democracy. Apart from these, in many practical matters the reasonable desires of Social Democracy have met with understanding and fulfilment on the part of German Governments, though Social Democracy may not have always recognised this fact. In the future mutual understanding between Social Democracy and the Government, and between Social Democracy and the other parties, will be easier of achievement and of more frequent occurrence than in the past, since the painful division of Germans into national and non-national parties has been done away with in this war. Even Social Democracy yielded to the national idea at the outbreak of the war.

In publishing this separate edition, when so long a time has elapsed since the editions in foreign languages appeared, I comply with the wishes of many German friends.

FÜRST VON BÜLOW

*Berlin,*

*May 16th, 1916.*



# IMPERIAL GERMANY

## CHAPTER I

### GERMANY'S STRUGGLE FOR WORLD POWER

"In spite of the length of their history, the German people is the youngest of the great nations of Western Europe. A period of youth has twice fallen to their lot, and with it the struggle to establish their power as a State, and to gain freedom for civilisation. A thousand years ago they founded the proudest kingdom of the Germans; eight hundred years later they had to build up their State anew on quite different foundations, and it is only in our times that, as a united people, they entered the ranks of the nations."

THESE words, with which Treitschke begins his "German History," not only show deep historical knowledge, but also have a very modern political significance. Germany is the youngest of the Great Powers of Europe, the *homo novus* who, having sprung up very recently, has forced his way by his own superior capacity into the circle of the older nations. The new Great Power was looked upon as an uninvited and unwelcome intruder, when, after three glorious and successful campaigns, it entered the company of the Great Powers of Europe a formidable figure and demanded its

## Imperial Germany

share of the treasures of the world. For centuries Europe had not believed in the possibility of the national unification of the individual German territories as one State. At any rate the European Powers had done their best to prevent this. In particular the policy of France, from the time of Richelieu to that of Napoleon III., was directed towards maintaining and intensifying the disruption of Germany, as it was rightly recognised that the ascendancy of France, *la prépondérance légitime de la France*, depended primarily on this state of affairs. Nor did the other Powers desire the unification of Germany. On this point the Emperor Nicholas and Lord Palmerston, as well as Metternich and Thiers, were at one. Nothing could show more clearly the marvellous way in which the mature wisdom of our old Emperor co-operated with the genius of Prince Bismarck than the fact that they effected the unification of Germany, not only in the face of all the difficulties with which they were confronted at home—long cherished rivalries and hatreds, all the sins of our past, and all the peculiarities of our political character, but also in spite of all opposition, avowed or secret, and of the displeasure of the whole of Europe.

Suddenly the German Empire was in existence. More quickly even than had been feared, far stronger than anyone had guessed. None of the other Great Powers had desired the regeneration of Germany; each of them, when it actually took place, would have liked to prevent it. Small wonder that the new Great Power was not made welcome, but was looked upon as a nuisance. Even a very reserved and pacific policy could effect but little change in this first verdict. This

## Hurled from Dizzy Heights

union of the States of the Mid-European continent, so long prevented, so often feared, and at last accomplished by the force of German arms and incomparable statesmanship, seemed to imply something of the nature of a threat, or at any rate to be a disturbing factor.

In the middle of the 'nineties, in Rome, where I was Ambassador at that time, my English colleague, Sir Clare Ford, said to me: "How much pleasanter and easier it was in the world of politics when England, France and Russia constituted the areopagus of Europe, and at most Austria had to be occasionally consulted." Those good old days are past. More than forty years ago the council of Europe had to admit another member entitled to vote, one that had not only the wish to express its opinion, but also the power to act; [a power which our enemies in the world war have been made to feel even more fearfully than they had feared].

A strenuous task in the history of the world had reached completion in the masterpiece of Prince Bismarck. The unflinching purpose of the Hohenzollern dynasty for centuries required the patient heroism of the Prussian army and the resolute devotion of the Prussian people, until, after many changes of fortune, the Mark of Brandenburg rose to the rank of a Great Power, as the kingdom of Prussia. Twice the prize seemed to slip from the grasp of the Prussian State. The crushing defeat of 1806 hurled Prussia down from the dizzy heights, which had filled her contemporaries with admiration and fear, and which she had attained under the rule of the great Frederick. Those people seemed to be right who had always considered the proud State of the great King to be

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nothing more than an artificial political structure, that would stand and fall with the unique political and military genius of its monarch. Its rise, after the overwhelming disasters of Jena and Tilsit, proved to an astonished world what innate and indestructible strength this State possessed. Such self-sacrifice and such heroism on the part of a whole people presuppose long-established national self-confidence. And as the people of Prussia did not rise in lawless rebellion like the much-admired Spaniards and the honest Tyrolese peasants, but placed themselves one and all, unquestioningly, at the orders of the King and his advisers, it appeared, to everyone's surprise, that amongst the Prussians consciousness as a nation and as a State were one and the same thing; and that the people had been transformed into a nation under the strict discipline of Frederick's rule. The reorganisation of the State under the guidance of men of creative power during the years 1807 to 1813 won for the Government not only the obedience of its subjects but also their affection. In the war of liberation from 1813 to 1815 Prussia gained the respect of all, and the confidence of many of the non-Prussian Germans.

It was a rich inheritance that the great period of upheaval and liberation left behind. But owing to the reaction of a feeble and inglorious foreign policy, and to a home administration which never knew when to be open-handed and when to refuse, this inheritance was to a large extent squandered in the course of the following decades. Towards the end of the 'fifties in the nineteenth century, both as regards the dignity of her attitude at

## New Forces

home and her prestige abroad, Prussia was vastly inferior to Prussia as she had emerged from the Wars of Liberation. True, the national movement in favour of unity had been placed on a solid foundation by the Prussian tariff policy, but the conference of Olmütz shattered the hopes of the German patriots who looked to Prussia for the fulfilment of their wishes as a nation. Prussia seemed to renounce her mission in world history and to relinquish the continuation in the sphere of political power, of the work of unification—that she had deliberately begun on the economic side.

Many new forces had certainly been put at the disposal of national life by the reorganisation of the State on constitutional lines. This State would have gained immensely, both in internal vitality and in national striking power, if at the right time this loyal people had been summoned to take part in politics, as Stein and Hardenberg, Blücher and Gneisenau, Wilhelm von Humboldt and Boyen, and also Yorck and Bülow-Dennewitz had wished. [In 1822 Yorck wrote: "Nothing is more foolish than to struggle helplessly against the elements; success can only be achieved by guiding the stream into a suitable channel." Thus spoke Yorck, the stern old man.] When the great step of forming a constitutional National assembly was taken, thirty-three years too late, the want of confidence between the people and the authorities was too deeply rooted, the credit of the government had been too much damaged in the course of the revolutionary rising, for the modern forms of government to bring about an immediate improvement. The course of Prussian policy was hampered at home by suspicious

## **Imperial Germany**

and doctrinaire representatives of the people, while it was checked abroad by the hitherto invincible opposition of Austria with her claims to ascendancy. Then, summoned at the critical moment by King William, almost at the eleventh hour, Bismarck took the tiller of the drifting Prussian ship of state.

The clear-sighted patriots of those times were well aware of the fact that in the normal course of historical development the union of German States under Prussian leadership must come to pass, and that it was the noblest aim of Prussian statesmanship to hasten and to bring about its consummation. But every road by which an attempt had been made to reach this end had proved impassable. As time went on, less and less seemed to be expected from the initiative of the Prussian Government. All the well-meant but unpractical efforts to induce the German people to take into its own hands the determination of its fate failed through the want of impetus from the various Governments—an impetus which is more decisive in Germany probably than in any other country.

In "Wilhelm Meister," when the melancholy Aurelia finds fault in many ways with the Germans, Lothario, a man of experience, replies that there is no better nation than the Germans, so long as they are rightly guided. The German, of whatever stock he be, has always accomplished his greatest works under strong, steady and firm guidance, and has seldom done well without such guidance, or in opposition to the Government and rulers. Bismarck himself has told us in his "Gedanken und Erinnerungen" ("Reflections and Reminiscences") that he was from the first quite clear

## Bismarck's Realisation

on this point. With the intuition of genius he found the way in which the hopes of the people and the interests of the German Governments might be reconciled. Probably no other statesman ever had so deep a knowledge of the history of the nation he was called upon to guide. Behind the external sequence of events he sought and found the motive forces of national life. He, who was born in the year of Waterloo, and was confirmed by Schleiermacher in the Church of the Trinity in Berlin, never forgot the great times of the liberation and the rise of Prussia; at the beginning of his career as a moulder of the destinies of the world, the remembrance of these days was always with him. He realised that in Germany the will-power of the nation would not be strengthened, nor national passions roused by friction between the Government and the people, but by the clash of German pride, honour and ambitions against the resistance and the demands of foreign nations. So long as the question of German unification was a problem of home politics, a problem over which the political parties, and the Government and the people wrangled, it could not give birth to a mighty, compelling national movement that would sweep nations and princes alike along on a tide of enthusiasm. When he made it clear that the German question was essentially a question of European politics, when on this the non-German opponents of German unification began to move, Bismarck gave the princes the opportunity of putting themselves at the head of the national movement.

Bismarck had had a glimpse, in Frankfurt, St. Petersburg and Paris, of the cards which the Powers

## Imperial Germany

of Europe held. He had perceived that the unification of Germany would continue to be a purely national question only so long as it remained a vain wish, a fruitless hope of the Germans; and that it would become an international question the very moment it entered on the stage of realisation. A struggle with the opposition in Europe lay in the path of the solution of the great problem of German policy. The opposition in Germany itself could hardly be overcome except by such a struggle. By this means national policy was interwoven with international policy; with incomparable audacity and constructive statesmanship, in consummating the work of uniting Germany, he left out of play the political capabilities of the Germans, in which they have never excelled, while he called into action their fighting powers, which have always been their strongest point.

By a happy dispensation, Bismarck found a general such as Moltke and a military organiser such as Roon to support him. The military achievements which had enabled us to regain our position as a Great Power in Europe also assured that position. They long discouraged any attempt of the Great Powers to deprive us of our right to a voice in the councils of Europe, a right which we had won in three victorious campaigns, and which has since then, for nearly half a century, never been seriously disputed, although it was unwillingly granted. With the single exception of France, every one, in all probability, would have gradually become reconciled to Germany's political power if her development had ceased with the founding of the Empire. But the political unification was not the end

## William II. Leads the Way

of our history but the beginning of a new era. In the front rank of the Powers, Germany once more participated in full in the life of Europe. For a long time, however, the life of Europe had formed only a part of the life of all the nations of the world.

[Foreign] politics had become more and more concerned with the world at large. The path of world politics lay open to Germany too, when she had won a powerful position on a level with the older Great Powers. The question was whether we should tread that new path [risk the "grand game," as Disraeli used to call world politics], or whether we should hesitate to undertake further hazardous enterprises for fear of compromising our newly acquired power.

In the Emperor William II. the nation found a clear-sighted, strong-willed guide, who led them along the new road. With him we trod the path of world politics; but not as conquerors, not amid adventures and quarrels. We advanced slowly, and our rate of progress was regulated, not by the impatience of ambition, but by the interests we had to promote and the rights we had to assert. We did not plunge into world politics, we grew, so to speak, into our task in that sphere, and we did not exchange the old European policy of Prussia and Germany for the new world policy; as is clearly shown by the course of the great war both on the economic and the military side, our strength to-day is rooted, as it has been since time immemorial, in the ancient soil of Europe.

"It is the task of our generation to maintain our position on the Continent, which is the basis of our position in the world, and at the same time to foster

## Imperial Germany

our interests overseas and pursue a prudent, sensible and wisely restricted world policy, in such a way that the safety of the German people may not be endangered, and that the future of the nation may not be imperilled." With these words I attempted on November 14, 1906, towards the close of a detailed exposition of the international situation, to formulate the task which Germany must perform at the present time, and, as far as man can judge, will have to perform in the future : a world policy based on the solidly laid foundation of our position as one of the Great Powers of Europe.

At first voices were raised in protest when we trod the new paths of world politics, for it was considered a mistake to depart from the approved ways of Bismarck's Continental policy. The fact was overlooked that it was Bismarck himself who pointed out the new way to us by bringing our old policy to a close. His work, in fact, gave us access to world politics. Only when Germany had attained political strength was the development of German commerce and industry to a world position possible. It was not till the Empire had secured its old position in Europe that it could think of defending the interests which German enterprise, German industry and commercial foresight had created in all quarters of the globe. It is certain that Bismarck did not foresee the course of this new development of Germany, nor the details of the problems of this new epoch ; and it was not possible for him to do so.

Amongst the rich and abundant treasures of political wisdom that Prince Bismarck bequeathed to us there are no universally applicable maxims, such as

## Years of Gigantic Achievement

he formulated for a large number of eventualities in our national life, that we can make use of in the problems of our world policy. We seek in vain in the conclusions of his practical policy for a justification of the steps which our world tasks exact from us. However, Bismarck also paved the way for these new and different times. We must never forget that without the gigantic achievements of Prince Bismarck, who with a mighty effort retrieved in the space of years what had been mismanaged and neglected for centuries, this new era would never have dawned. [“*C'est la diplomatie de Bismarck qui a fait du vrai les victoires allemandes de 1866 et de 1870*”<sup>1</sup>: thus wrote Victor Bérard in the *Revue des deux Mondes* a few weeks after the outbreak of the world war.] But though every new epoch of historical development is dependent on its predecessor, and derives its motive power in a greater or less degree from the past, it can only bring progress in its wake if it abandons old methods and aims and strives to attain others of its own. Even if, in the course of our new world policy, we have departed from the purely European policy of the first Chancellor, yet it still remains true that the world tasks of the twentieth century are, properly speaking, the continuation of the work he completed in the field of Continental policy. In my speech on November 14, 1906, I pointed out that Bismarck's successors must not imitate but develop his policy. “If,” I said at that time, “the course of events demands that we transcend the limits of Bismarck's aims, then we must do so.”

<sup>1</sup> It is Bismarck's diplomacy which really achieved the German victories of 1866 and 1870.

## Imperial Germany

The course of events has long driven German policy out from the narrow confines of Europe into the wider world. It was not ambitious restlessness which urged us to imitate the Great Powers that had long ago embarked on world politics. The strength of the nation, rejuvenated by the political reorganisation, as it grew, burst the bounds of its old home, and its policy was dictated by the new interests and needs. In proportion as our national life has become world wide, the policy of the German Empire has become a world policy.

In the year 1871 the number of inhabitants dwelling within the new German Empire was 41,058,792. They found work and a living in their own country, and, moreover, both were better and easier to get than before; this was due to the protection afforded by increased national power, the great improvement in the means of communication effected at the founding of the Empire, and the blessings of the new common German legislation. In the year 1900 the number of inhabitants had risen to 56,367,178, and to-day it has reached 68,000,000. The Empire could no longer support in the old way this immense mass of humanity within its boundaries. Owing to this enormous increase of population, German commerce and industry, and in consequence German policy, was confronted with a tremendous problem. This had to be solved, if foreign countries were not to profit by the superfluity of German life which the mother country was not able to support. In the year 1883 about 173,000 Germans emigrated; in 1892 the number was 116,339; in 1898 only 22,921; and since then the average has remained at this last low

## Economic Proportions

figure. Thus in the year 1883 Germany afforded the inhabitants, who numbered 22,000,000 less than to-day, inferior conditions of life to those which her 68,000,000 subjects enjoy at the present time. During the same period of time German foreign trade rose from 6,000 million marks to 22,540 million before the war. Foreign trade and the means of support of a nation have an obvious connection with each other. Clearly not so much on account of the actual food imported as of the greater opportunities for work which the industries dependent on foreign trade afford, although the difficulties of providing food for the people in this war, when maritime trade has been cut off, plainly demonstrate how closely the provision market at home depends on world commerce.

It was the great development of industry that primarily led to the solution of the problem with which, owing to the increase of the population, the nation was confronted; and this solution was reached, moreover, without prejudice to the older spheres of industry, although these suffered to some extent at first, on account of the surprising speed with which the development took place. The enormous increase in number and extent of the industrial enterprises, which to-day employ millions of workmen and officials, could only be attained by winning a prominent place for German industry in the markets of the world. If at the present time it was dependent on the raw material supplied by the Continent for its manufactures, and on the European market for the sale of its goods, the gigantic proportions which modern trade has assumed would be out of the question, and millions

## **Imperial Germany**

of Germans who to-day earn their living directly through these industries, would be out of work and starving.

According to statistics, in the year 1911 raw material for industrial purposes was imported to the amount of 5,393 million, and manufactured goods to the amount of 5,460 million marks were exported. To this must be added an export of raw material, chiefly mining produce, to the amount of 2,205 million. The imports of foodstuffs and luxuries before the war amounted to 3,077 million, and the exports to 1,096 million marks. These lifeless figures assume a living interest when we consider how important they are for the welfare of the Germans, and that the work and the very existence of millions of our fellow citizens depend on them. Foreign trade handles these colossal masses of goods. A very small proportion of them are transported along the railways and waterways of the Continent; by far the greater part are carried abroad by the vessels of German shipowners.

Industry, commerce and the shipping trade have transformed the old industrial life of Germany into one of world industry, and this has also carried the Empire in political matters beyond the limits which Prince Bismarck set to German statecraft.

With her foreign trade of 22,500 millions, Germany was in 1913 second only to Great Britain with her 27,000 millions, and surpassed the United States with their 17,000 millions; she was consequently the second greatest commercial power in the world. In the year 1913, 89,329 German ships and 26,637 foreign ships entered the German ports, while 90,456 German and

## **Maritime Progress**

26,919 foreign ships sailed from them. On an average the German shipyards built eighty new steamers and fifty new sailing ships a year. With rapid strides we Germans have won a place in the front rank of the seafaring nations who carry on oversea trade.

## CHAPTER II

### BUILDING THE GERMAN NAVY

THE sea has become a factor of more importance in our national life than ever before in our history, even in the great days of the German Hansa. It has become a vital nerve which we must not allow to be severed, if we do not wish to be transformed from a rising and youthfully vigorous people into a decaying and ageing one. But we were exposed to this danger as long as our foreign commerce and our mercantile marine lacked national protection at sea against the superior navies of other powers. The task that the armed forces of the German Empire had to fulfil had changed considerably, since the protection on the Continent that our army secured us no longer sufficed to shield our home industries from interference, encroachment and attack. The army needed the support of a navy that we might enjoy the fruits of our national labour.

When in the spring of 1864 the English Ambassador in Berlin drew the attention of the then Prussian President of the Council to the excitement in England caused by Prussia's advance against Denmark, and let fall the remark that if Prussia did not cease operations the English Government might be forced to take arms against her, Herr von Bismarck-Schönhausen replied : "Well, what harm can you do us? At worst you can throw a few shells at Stolpmünde or Pillau,

## Then and Now

and that is all." Bismarck was right at that time. We were then as good as unassailable to England with her mighty sea power, for we were invulnerable at sea. We possessed neither a great mercantile marine, the destruction of which could sensibly injure us, nor any oversea trade worth mentioning, the crippling of which we need fear.

To-day it is different. We are now vulnerable at sea. We have entrusted millions to the ocean, and with these millions the weal and woe of many of our countrymen. If we had not in good time provided protection for these valuable and indispensable national possessions, we should have been exposed to the danger of having one day to look on defencelessly while we were permanently deprived of them. But then we could not have returned to the comfortable economic and political existence of a purely inland State. We should rather have been placed in the position of being unable to employ and support a considerable number of our millions of inhabitants at home. [Even if by the co-operation of the military and administrative organisations, with the incomparable powers of adaptability displayed by industry, agriculture and labour, it has been found possible during the course of a war, which keeps with the colours millions of Germans who would otherwise be working, to nullify the results of Germany's exclusion from international commerce and the markets of the world; peaceful industrial development could hardly maintain its progress if Germany renounced her claim to take part in the commerce of the world. Our economic life demands security, based on our own power, for

## Imperial Germany

our freedom of movement on the seas and in the world. This necessity indicates one of the first and most important aims which must be achieved by our successes in the war.]

Ever since the end of the 'eighties in the nineteenth century the building of a fleet sufficient to defend our oversea interests had been a vital question for the German nation. It is greatly to the credit of the Emperor William II. that he recognised this, and devoted all the power of the throne and all the strength of his own personality to the attainment of this end. It only adds to his merit that he, as head of the Empire, championed the building of the German fleet at the very moment when the German people had to come to a decision about their future, and when, as far as man can tell, Germany had the last chance of forging the sea weapons that she needed.

The fleet was to be built while we maintained our position on the Continent, without our coming into conflict with England, whom we could at that time not oppose at sea, but also while we preserved intact our national honour and dignity. Parliamentary opposition, which at that time was considerable, could only be overcome if steady pressure were brought to bear on Parliament by public opinion. In view of the anxious and discouraged state of feeling that obtained in Germany during the ten years following Prince Bismarck's retirement, it was only possible to rouse public opinion by harping on the string of nationalism, and awakening the national consciousness. The great oppression which had weighed on the spirit of the nation since the rupture between the wearer of the

## Our Foremost Task

Imperial crown and the mighty man who had brought it up from the depths of Kyffhäuser, could not be lifted unless the German Emperor could set before his people, who at that time were not united either by common hopes or demands, a new goal towards which to strive, and could indicate to them "a place in the sun" to which they had a right, and which they must try to attain. On the other hand, patriotic feeling must not be roused to such an extent as to damage irreparably our relations with England, against whom our defensive power at sea would for years still be insufficient, and at whose mercy we lay in 1897, as a competent judge said at the time, like so much butter before the knife. To make it possible to build a sufficient fleet was the foremost and greatest task of German policy after Bismarck's retirement; a task with which I also was immediately confronted when, on June 28, 1897, at Kiel, on board the *Hohenzollern*, I was entrusted by His Majesty the Emperor, with the conduct of foreign affairs, on the same day and the same spot on which twelve years later I handed in my resignation.

On March 28, 1897, the Reichstag had passed the third reading of the Budget Committee's Report, which had made considerable reduction in the demands of the Government for ships to take the place of obsolete types, for equipment and for the construction of additional vessels. On November 27, after Admiral Hollmann, till then Secretary of State at the Imperial Admiralty Office, had been replaced by a man of first-rate capabilities, Admiral von Tirpitz, the Government brought out a new Navy Bill which demanded

## Imperial Germany

the construction of seven additional ships of the line, of two large and seven small cruisers, fixed the date of completion of the new constructions for the end of the financial year 1904, and, by limiting the period of service of the ships, and determining what squadrons were to be kept on permanent active service, ensured the building in due time of the ships which were to take the place of out-of-date vessels. The Bill runs as follows : "Without prejudice to the rights of the Reichstag, and without demanding the imposition of new taxes, the federated Governments have before them, not an unlimited naval programme; their sole object is to create within a definite time a national fleet, merely of such strength and power as to protect effectively the maritime interests of the Empire." The Bill placed our naval policy on an entirely new footing. Up till then new ships had from time to time been demanded and to some extent granted; but the navy had lacked the solid foundation that the army possessed in its absolutely definite constitution. By the limitation of the period of service of the ships on the one hand, and the determination of the number of effective ships on the other, the navy became a definite constituent part of our national defence.

The building of the German fleet, like other great undertakings in the course of our national history, had to be carried out with an eye on foreign countries. It was only to be expected that this important strengthening of our national power would rouse uneasiness and suspicion in England.

The policy of no State in the world is so firmly bound by tradition as that of England; and it is in no

## 509 British Naval Supremacy

small degree due to the unbroken continuity of her Foreign policy, handed down from century to century, pursuing its aims on definite lines, independent of the changes of party government, that England has attained such magnificent successes in world politics. [The British Empire, which is three times the size of Europe, embraces at the present day a fifth part of the globe and a quarter of all mankind.] The alpha and omega of English policy has always been the attainment and maintenance of English naval supremacy. To this aim all other considerations, friendships as well as enmities, have always been subordinated. [For the attainment of this one object of English policy, Englishmen have at no time scrupled to use all the means at their disposal. This war proves it anew.]

During the second half of the eighteenth and the first half of the nineteenth centuries England lent her support to Prussia, and did so, moreover, just at critical times in Prussian history, in the Seven Years' War, and in the time of Napoleon I. But the English attitude was hardly determined by any kindly sympathy with the kindred State in the north of Germany, struggling so manfully and laboriously to rise. To gain her own ends England supported the strongest opponent of the greatest European Power; and when she had attained her object, coolly left in the lurch Frederick the Great in his hour of need, and Prussia at the Congress of Vienna. While the power of France was being strained to the uttermost by the Seven Years' War, England secured her possessions in North America. In the great years of 1813 to 1815 Prussia, with impetuous courage, finally shattered Napoleon's

## Imperial Germany

power. When at Vienna Prussia had to bargain bitterly for every inch of land, England had already won her supremacy, and, after the downfall of her French opponent, could look upon it as assured for a considerable time. As the enemy of the strongest European Power, we were England's friend. In consequence of the events of 1866 and 1870, Prussia-Germany became the greatest Power on the Continent, and to English ideas, gradually took the place that France had occupied under the "Roi Soleil" and the two Bonapartes. English policy followed its traditional trend and opposed the Continental Power which for the time being was strongest. After the downfall of the Habsburg rule in Spain, Bourbon France became England's natural opponent, from the time of the distinguished part played by Marlborough in the War of the Spanish Succession to that of the Alliance with the victor of the Battle of Rossbach, which was celebrated in London as a triumph of British arms. After decades of jealous mistrust of Russia, which, under Catherine II., had gained enormously in power, English policy was turned anew with full vigour against France, when Napoleon led the armies of the Republic to victory over all the States of the Continent. In the struggle between the First Empire and England, the latter was victorious, no doubt owing to the unswerving and magnificent continuity of her policy, to the victories of her fleet at Aboukir and Trafalgar, and the successes of the Iron Duke in Spain, but also to the tenacity of the Russians and Austrians, and, above all, to the impetuosity of our old Blücher and his Prussians. When, after the fall of Napoleon, the

## The Balance of Power

military ascendancy seemed to move from the west of Europe to the east, England made a political change of front. England was largely responsible for the result of the Crimean War, so disastrous to the Russians, and for the ruin of the ambitious plans of the proud Emperor Nicholas I.; moreover, the Emperor Alexander II., too, found the policy of the English barring his way, more especially in the Near East, for so long the centre of Russian ambitions and hopes. The English alliance with Japan owed its birth to considerations similar to those which led to the *entente cordiale* with France, which latter has exercised a decisive influence on the international politics of the present day.

The interest that England takes in the balance of power on the Continent is, of course, not confined to the welfare of such Powers as feel themselves oppressed or threatened by the superior strength of another. Such humane sympathy rarely has decisive influence on the political resolves of the Government of a great State. The direction of English policy depends primarily on the way in which the distribution of power in Europe reacts on English naval supremacy, and any shifting of the distribution of power, which is not likely to entail such a reaction, has always been more or less a matter of indifference to the English Government. If England traditionally—that is to say, in accordance with what she regards as her unchanging national interests—takes up a hostile or at least a suspicious attitude towards the European Power which for the time being is strongest, the cause must be sought in the importance which England attributes to

## **Imperial Germany**

a superior Continental Power with respect to overseas politics. A Great Power of Europe that has proved its military strength in so striking a manner that, in the normal course of affairs, it need fear no attack on its frontiers, has practically developed the conditions of national existence by means of which England has become the greatest sea and commercial power in the world. England with her strength and her courage, could fare forth unconcernedly on the ocean, for she knew that, having the sea for a protection, her borders were safe from hostile attacks. If the borders of a Continental Power are similarly protected by the fear which its victorious and superior army inspires, it obtains the freedom of action in oversea affairs which England owes to her geographical position. It becomes a competitor in the field in which England claims supremacy. In this, English policy is based on historical experience —one might almost say on the law of the evolution of nations and states.

Every nation with sound instincts and with healthy public institutions, has attempted to win its way to the sea if Nature has denied it a coast. The bitterest and most protracted struggles have always raged round coast-lines and harbours, from Corcyra and Potidæa, which were the cause of the Peloponnesian War, to Kavalla, about which the Greeks and Bulgarians quarrelled in our times. Nations which could not reach the sea, or were forced away from it, silently abandoned all claim to a place in world history. The possession of the coast-line means neither more nor less than the opportunity to develop

## The Key of the Ocean

oversea power, and, finally, the opportunity to transform Continental politics into world politics. Those European nations that have not made use of their coasts and harbours for this purpose, were unable to do so because they required all their forces to defend their borders against their opponents on the Continent. Thus the extensive colonial schemes of the Great Elector had to be abandoned by his successors.

Access to the paths of international politics was always easiest for the strongest Continental Power. But England guarded these paths. When Louis XIV. proposed a Franco-English alliance to Charles II., the English king, who in other respects was very friendly to the French, replied that certain obstacles stood in the way of a sincere alliance, and that the most considerable of these were the efforts France was then making to become a formidable Sea Power. For England, whose only importance lay in her commerce and her fleet, this would be such a cause of suspicion that every step which France took in that direction would rouse afresh the jealousy between the two nations. After the conclusion of the Peace of Hubertusburg, the elder Pitt expressed in Parliament his regret that France had been afforded the opportunity to build up her fleet again. It was mainly as an opponent of French oversea policy that England took sides against France in the war of the Spanish Succession, a war which dealt France's supremacy in Europe the first searching blow, and in which England not only obtained the key of the ocean by winning Gibraltar, but also gained possession of the heart of Canada, for

## **Imperial Germany**

which France had fought so strenuously. In the middle of the eighteenth century Lord Chatham said: "The only danger that England need fear will arise on the day that sees France attain the rank of a great Sea, Commercial, and Colonial Power." And before the Crimean War David Urquhart wrote: "Our insular position leaves us only the choice between omnipotence and impotence. Britannia will either become mistress of the seas or will be swallowed up by them." [And in 1905 the Belgian Minister in Berlin, Baron Greindl, summed up his opinion of the opposition between England and Germany in these words: "The true cause of the hatred of the English for the Germans is jealousy, roused by the extraordinarily rapid development of German industry. . . . Accustomed as they are to have no rivals, Englishmen look upon all competition as an infringement of their rights."]

## CHAPTER III

### GERMAN AND BRITISH SEA POWER

THE English policy outlined at the close of the previous chapter has remained true to itself up to the present time, because England is still, as she was formerly, the first Sea Power. Subtler diplomatic conflicts have taken the place of the more violent struggles of olden times. The political aim remains the same. When Germany, after the solution of her old Continental problems—after securing her position in Europe—was neither willing nor able to refrain from embarking on international politics, she was bound to inconvenience England. But even if we can understand the traditions of English policy, such understanding in no wise implies the admission that England had any reason to contemplate the expansion of German national industries into world industries, of German Continental policy into world policy, and especially the construction of a German navy with the same mistrust that was perhaps justified in other centuries and in the case of other Powers.

The course of our world policy differed completely in its means as well as in its ends, from the old-time attempts at conquering the world made by Spain, France, and at one time by Holland and Russia. The world policy against which England made such a determined stand in the past mostly aimed at a

## Imperial Germany

more or less violent change in the international situation. We only keep in view the change in the conditions of our national life. The world policy of other countries which England often opposed was of an offensive nature, ours was defensive. It was both necessary and desirable for us to be so strong at sea that no Sea Power could attack us without grave risk. We had to be free to protect our oversea interests, independently of the influence and the choice of other Sea Powers. Our vigorous national development, mainly in the industrial sphere, forced us to cross the ocean. For the sake of our interests, as well as of our honour and dignity, we were obliged to see that we won for our world policy the same independence that we had secured for our European policy. [Our fleet had to be made so strong, and must in future remain so strong, that naval warfare with us is fraught with danger which will imperil the superiority of even the mightiest Sea Power.] The fulfilment of this national duty might eventually be rendered more difficult by English opposition, but no opposition in the world could release us from it.

Our fleet had to be built with an eye to English policy—and in this way it was built. My efforts in the field of international politics had to be directed to the fulfilment of this task. [When these pages first appeared *The Times* remarked that I had worked with all my might for the building of a German fleet and had made it possible to enlarge it; this is quite true, with the reservation that I never advocated an unlimited naval policy, but to the best of my ability endeavoured to secure the building of a fleet adequate for our defence

## Between Two Stools

and in accordance with the expanding needs of our world policy.]

For two reasons Germany had to adopt an internationally independent position. We could not be guided in our decisions and acts by a policy directed against England, nor might we, for the sake of England's friendship, become dependent upon her. Both dangers existed, and more than once were perilously imminent. In our development as a Sea Power we could not reach our goal either as England's satellite, or as her antagonist. [Machiavelli said it was unwise to attach oneself to any one more powerful than oneself, as one is then at the latter's mercy. In a conversation with Heinrich v. Sybel at Friedrichsruh, Prince Bismarck said in 1893: "England is Germany's most dangerous opponent. She thinks herself invincible and does not deem Germany's assistance necessary. England does not yet consider us her equal, and would only conclude an alliance with us on terms that we could never accept. In any alliance that we conclude we must be the stronger party." As long as we were not in a position to defend ourselves at sea no really sincere and friendly relations could exist between us and the greatest Sea Power, unless we renounced our plan of enlarging the navy. We should have had to give up the further development not only of our battle fleet, but also of our mercantile marine, and thus once and for all we should have lost every hope of competing with England in over-sea trade.] England's unreserved and certain friendship could only have been bought at the price of those very international plans for the sake of which we had sought

## Imperial Germany

British friendship. Had we followed this course we should have made the mistake to which the Roman poet refers when he says that one must not "*propter vitam vivendi perdere causas.*" [To have renounced our naval policy in order to please England would have been tantamount to declaring the bankruptcy of Germany as a rising World Power.] But as England's enemy we should have had little prospect of reaching such a point in our development as a Sea and Commercial Power as we have actually attained.

During the Boer War, which strained the forces of the British Empire to the uttermost, and led England into great difficulties, there seemed to be an opportunity of dealing the secret opponent of our world policy a shrewd blow. As in the rest of Europe, enthusiasm for the Boers ran high in Germany. Had the Government undertaken to put a spoke in England's wheel, it would have been sure of popular approval. To many it seemed that the European situation was favourable to a momentary success against England, and that French assistance was assured. But there was only a seeming community of interests against England in Europe, and any eventual political success against England in the Boer question would have had no real value for us. An attempt to proceed to action at the bidding of the pro-Boer feelings of that time would soon have had a sobering effect. Among the French the deeply rooted national hatred against the German Empire would speedily and completely have ousted the momentary ill-feeling against England, as soon as we had definitely committed ourselves to a hostile course; and a fundamental change of front in French policy

## Germany and the Boer War

would immediately have come within the range of practical politics. However painful the memory of the then recent events at Fashoda might be to French pride, it could not suffice to turn the scale against the memory of Sedan. The Egyptian Sudan and the White Nile had not driven the thought of Metz and Strassburg from the hearts of the French. There was great danger that we should be thrust forward against England by France, who at the psychological moment would refuse her aid. As in Schiller's beautiful poem, "Die Ideale" ("The Ideals"), our companions would have vanished midway.

But even if, by taking action in Europe, we had succeeded in thwarting England's South African policy, our immediate national interests would not have benefited thereby. From that moment onward for many a long day our relations with England would have been poisoned. England's passive resistance to the world policy of new Germany would have been changed to very active hostility. During those years we were occupied in founding our sea power by building the German navy, and even in the event of defeat in the South African War, it was possible for England to stifle our sea power in the embryo. Our neutral attitude during the Boer War had its origin in weighty considerations of the national interests of the German Empire.

Our navy was not yet strong enough for us forcibly to achieve a sufficient sea power in the teeth of English interests. Nor could we, by being towed in the wake of English policy, attain a development of Ger-

## Imperial Germany

man sea power which was so contrary to English wishes.

It was an obvious suggestion that the English opposition which was directed against German world policy, and above all against the construction of a German navy, might be overcome most easily by an alliance between Germany and England. Indeed, at times the idea of an Anglo-German alliance has been discussed in the Press of both countries, especially about the beginning of the new century. It had already occupied Bismarck's thoughts, but the final result was only the resigned remark: "We would be willing enough to love the English, but they will not allow us to do so." German interests would have gained nothing by stipulations which England might disregard in the event of a change of Ministry, or the occurrence of any other circumstances over which we had no control, while we continued bound to them. Nor would it have sufficed us that some Minister or other seemed disposed to an Anglo-German agreement. To make a lasting agreement the whole Cabinet, and above all the Prime Minister, would have had to support it. Bismarck pointed out how difficult it was to establish firm relations with England, because treaties of long duration were not in accordance with English traditions, and the expression of opinion of English politicians, even those in a prominent position, and the transitory moods of the English Press were by no means equivalent to immutable pledges.

[From the time of the Crimean War until the outbreak of the world war, England entered into no alliance

## The Crisis of 1914

with any Continental Power; and even on the eve of this war English ministers still declared that England must not make her position dependent on alliances which would fix definite obligations on her. In the speech in the House of Commons in which Sir Edward Grey, on August 4, 1914, defended England's participation in the world war, he said that six years previously, during the Bosnian crisis, he had told the Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs at that time, that public opinion in England would not allow the English Government to give Russia anything more than diplomatic support. "I told Mr. Iswolski definitely then, this being a Balkan crisis, a Balkan affair, I did not consider that public opinion in this country would justify us in promising to give anything more than diplomatic support. . . . In this present crisis, up till yesterday, we have also given no promise of anything more than diplomatic support—up till yesterday no promise of more than diplomatic support."

The speech to which I here refer, and in which the English Minister sounded the tocsin of war, is chiefly devoted to proving that up to the last England had kept a free hand. With such care and prudence did England up to the last moment pursue a policy, even towards France, which rendered it possible for her to act in accordance with the logical consequences of her hitherto friendly relations with that country or not, as she thought expedient under the circumstances. And yet France occupied a very different position from ours with regard to England; for many reasons English public opinion was more favourable to France than to us, because England had for

## Imperial Germany

years not looked upon France as a rival, and certainly not as a serious competitor at sea or in trade.

There is no doubt room for differences of opinion as to whether a treaty of neutrality with England would have been to our advantage after the death of King Edward, when our fleet, though not fully developed, had attained dimensions which sufficed for our defence at that time. It is perfectly obvious that as long as our fleet was insufficient even for defensive purposes, and certainly when we had only just begun to build it and as long as King Edward reigned, we could not bind ourselves to England without the surest guarantees; and above all we could not be England's cat's paw in Russian affairs.] In consideration of the widespread jealousy roused in England by Germany's industrial progress, and especially by the increase of the German navy, it was only on condition of absolutely binding pledges on the part of England that we could have set foot on the bridge of an Anglo-German alliance. We could only thus unite ourselves with England on the assumption that the bridge which was to help us over the real and supposed differences between England and Germany was strong enough to bear our weight. [The actual attitude of the English towards us, just at the time when they were making advances to us, showed how incapable England was of restraining her jealousy and hatred, even when she was trying to win our favour. I need only recall her attitude on the occasion of the troubles in Samoa in 1899, and her unjustified and brutal seizure of German mail packets, in neutral waters too, in January, 1900. Treaties are of value only when they are founded on mutual interests and common

## The New Century

aspirations. "*Il y a quelque chose de pire que l'isolement, ce sont des alliances au fond desquelles réside le soupçon,*"<sup>1</sup> says Pierre de la Gorce in his book on Napoleon III., that unhappy monarch whose foreign policy teaches one, better than any text-book on diplomacy, how not to set about it.

When at the beginning of the century this question of alliance was ventilated, the international situation was very different from that which obtained twelve years later. The latter, of course, also differed from that of the present day. In all politics, and especially in foreign politics, change is the one thing that is permanent. It is the task of those who are responsible always to envisage their own problems anew in the light of changing circumstances, without losing sight of the old, permanent aims of their nation's history.]

[At the beginning of the century Russia] had not been weakened by the Japanese War, but intended to secure and expand her newly-won position in the Far East, in particular on the Gulf of Pechili. Owing to the Asiatic questions pending between the two empires, relations between England and Russia were then rather strained. The danger was imminent that if Germany allied herself with England she would have to undertake the rôle against Russia that Japan assumed later single-handed. But we should have had to play this part under very different conditions from the very favourable ones which Japan found at her disposal in her conflict with Russia. The Japanese War was unpopular in Russia, and it had to be waged

<sup>1</sup> There are worse things than isolation, namely alliances in which suspicion lurks.

## Imperial Germany

at an immense distance, like a colonial war. If we had allowed ourselves to be thrust forward against Russia we should have found ourselves in a far more difficult position. A war against Germany would not, in these circumstances, have been unpopular in Russia, and would on the part of the Russians have been carried on with national enthusiasm. France would have had the *casus foederis*, and would have been able to wage her war of revenge under favourable circumstances. England was on the eve of the Boer War. Her position would have been improved if this great colonial enterprise had been supported and accompanied by a European complication, such as had rendered her good service in the middle of the eighteenth and in the first decade of the nineteenth centuries. We Germans would have had to wage strenuous war on land in two directions, while to England would have fallen the easier task of crippling our trade, of further extending her Colonial Empire without much trouble, and of profiting by the mutual weakening of the Continental Powers. [We should have allowed England to impose upon us in furtherance of her own aims, just as to-day France is imposed upon and bleeds to death for England's sake.] Last, but certainly not least, while military operations were going forward on the Continent, and for a long time after, we should have found neither strength nor means nor leisure to proceed with the building of our navy, as we have been able to do.

[Had we let slip this, possibly the last, propitious moment to forge our weapons at sea, we should have been forced to renounce all hope of maritime independ-

## Germany's Great Opportunity

ence for a long time to come, and with this, of an independent world policy. We should have risked our welfare for England against Russia, for naturally, when Chamberlain made overtures to us (which, however, were not endorsed by the Prime Minister, Lord Salisbury), it would have suited England if we, as her henchman, had rid her of Russia, whose presence in Eastern Asia irked her. As things stood at that time, it was certainly wiser to leave English interests undisturbed, so to speak, and to avoid both hostile encounters and docile dependence.]

Thus, unaffected and uninfluenced by England, we did in fact succeed in creating that power at sea which was the real basis of our industrial interests and our world policy; a power that the strongest enemy would not attack without hesitation. [How important this was for us has been proved in the present war, in which our battle fleet forces the main strength of the British navy to remain in the North Sea, and thus prevents England from using her full strength at the Straits in which submarine warfare has assumed overwhelming proportions, in which our submarines have proved sharp, effective and mighty weapons and have dealt enemy trade and traffic shrewd blows, whereby the British mastery of the sea is for the first time in many centuries seriously imperilled. On all the seas our heroic naval officers and their brave crews have won undying fame for our young German flag. The brave men of the *Emden*, the *Karlsruhe*, of the *Königsberg* and the *Möewe*, Count Spee, with his two sons, Otto Weddigen, and all those who adventured and fought in U-boats, will never be forgotten

## Imperial Germany

by our people. They will continue to live in our hearts, like the heroes of olden times and the heroes of the legends, Roland, Siegfried and Arminius.]

During the first ten years after the introduction of the Navy Bill of 1897, and while our shipbuilding was in its infancy, an English Government, ready to go to any lengths, could have made short work of our development as a Sea Power, and rendered us harmless before our claws had grown at sea. [In September, 1914, a Berlin newspaper remarked very pertinently that England wanted to subdue us before we grew too great, but had missed the right moment. We had meanwhile grown so strong that we could without undue fear do battle with England. And in the eighteenth month of the war the *Frankfurter Zeitung* wrote with equal justice that, when it came to actual warfare, England had discovered the distressing fact that in spite of all her plans for isolating us, she had missed the right moment for crushing the rival she feared.

While our fleet was in process of construction a preventive war] against Germany was repeatedly demanded in England. The Civil Lord of the Admiralty, Mr. Arthur Lee, asserted in a public speech on February 3, 1905, that attention should be directed to the North Sea, the British fleet should concentrate there, and in the event of war they must "strike the first blow, before the other side found time to read in the newspapers that war had been declared." The *Daily Chronicle* emphasised this utterance with the words: "If the German fleet had been smashed in October, 1904, we should have had peace in Europe for sixty years. For this reason we consider the statement

## Some English Opinions

Mr. Arthur Lee uttered, assuming that it was on behalf of the Cabinet, a wise and pacific declaration of the unalterable purpose of the Mistress of the Seas." As early as the autumn of 1904 the *Army and Navy Gazette* remarked how intolerable it was that England, entirely on account of the existence of the German fleet, was forced to adopt measures of defence which she would otherwise not have needed. The article runs: "Once before we had to snuff out a fleet, which we believed might be employed against us. There are many people, both in England and on the Continent, who consider the German fleet the only serious menace to the preservation of peace in Europe. Be that as it may, we are content to point out that the present moment is particularly favourable to our demand that the German fleet shall not be further increased." About the same time an English review of good standing, in an article in which a preventive war against Germany was openly preached, wrote: "If the German fleet were destroyed the peace of Europe would be assured for two generations. England and France, or England and the United States, or all three, would guarantee the freedom of the sea and prevent the building of more ships, which, in the hands of ambitious Powers, with a growing population and no colonies, are dangerous weapons."

Just at this time France affronted us in Morocco. A few months earlier, in June, 1904, a French publicist [and politician, who had excellent connections in England and France, and who for his own part had a genuine desire to promote peace, told

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me with an expression of the greatest disquietude] that the construction of our fleet called forth widespread and increasing anxiety in England; only England could not make up her mind how best to put a stop to our further shipbuilding, whether by direct representations or by encouraging the Chauvinistic elements in France. [My French friend, who a short time previously had spoken to influential persons of high standing in London, said to me: "You will not be able to complete your naval programme, for before long England will confront you with the alternative between ceasing your construction of ships, or seeing the British fleet put out to sea." Nevertheless, we did carry out our shipbuilding programme.] When, in the winter of 1909, an English Member of Parliament stated that England would not have needed to continue her sea armaments at such a feverish rate if she had ten years previously prevented the rise of the German Sea Power, he expressed a thought that, so far as the policy of mere force is concerned, was quite correct. But England would not have found an opportunity to nip our growing fleet in the bud, a thing she had repeatedly done in the past in the case of other countries, because we did not expose ourselves.

## CHAPTER IV

### GERMANY : A PROMOTER OF PEACE

THE fleet that we have built since 1897, and which, though far inferior to England's, has made us the second Sea Power of the world, enabled us to support our interests everywhere with all the weight of our reputation as a Great Power. The foremost duty of our navy is to protect our world commerce and the lives and honour of our countrymen abroad. German battleships have performed this task in the West Indies and the Far East.

Certainly, it was a predominantly defensive rôle that we assigned to our fleet. It is self-understood, however, that in serious international conflicts this defensive rôle might be extended. If the Empire should be wantonly attacked, from no matter what quarter, the sea, as a theatre of war, was bound to have a very different and much greater importance in our times than it had in 1870. In such a case the fleet as well as the army would, needless to say, in accordance with Prussian and German traditions, consider attack the best form of defence. But there was absolutely no ground for the fear which the building of our navy aroused, that with the rise of German power at sea the German love of battle might be awakened.

Of all the nations of the world the Germans are the people that have most rarely set out to attack

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and conquer. If we except the expeditions against Rome, led by the German Emperors in the Middle Ages, which originated rather in a grand if mistaken political illusion than in love of battle and conquest, we shall seek in vain in our past for wars of conquest that may be compared with those of France in the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, those of Spain under the Habsburgs, of Sweden in her best days, or those of the Russian and British Empires in the course of their fundamentally expansive national policy. For centuries we Germans have aimed at nothing but the defence and security of our country. Just as the Great King did not lead his unvanquished battalions on adventurous expeditions, after the conquest of Silesia and the safeguarding of the independence of the Prussian monarchy, so the Emperor William and Bismarck, after the unparalleled successes of two great wars, did not dream of attempting further military exploits. If any nation may boast of political self-restraint, it is the Germans. We have always set a limit to our successes ourselves, and have not waited till the exhaustion of our national resources made us halt. Consequently our evolution lacks periods of a brilliant and sudden rise; rather it is a slow and unwearied advance. The Germans have practically no tinge of that restlessness which in other nations urges men to find in success the spur to further bold effort. Our political character is less that of the rash, speculative merchant than that of the plodding peasant who, after sowing carefully, patiently awaits the harvest.

After the Franco-German War all the world was filled with dread of further military enterprises on

## The German Love of Peace

the part of Germany. There was no scheme of conquest, however improbable, that we were not credited with harbouring. Since then more than four decades have passed. The strength of our people has grown, we are richer in material possessions, and our army has become stronger and stronger. The German fleet has been created and developed. The number of great wars that have been waged since 1870 was on the whole rather greater than those in a similar period before. Germany did not seek to take part in any of them, and calmly resisted all attempts to be drawn into military entanglements.

Without boastfulness or exaggeration, we may say that never in the course of history has any Power, possessing such superior military strength as the Germans, served the cause of peace in an equal measure. This fact cannot be explained by our well-known and undoubted love of peace. The German has always been peace-loving, and has nevertheless had to draw his sword again and again in order to defend himself against foreign attacks. As a matter of fact, peace has primarily been preserved, not because Germany herself did not attack other nations, but because other nations feared a repulse in the event of their attacking Germany. From 1871 to 1914 the strength of our armaments has proved to be a guarantee of peace such as the last tumultuous centuries never knew. An historical judgment is contained in this fact.

Given a rightly guided foreign policy, the completion of our Lines of Defence by the navy constituted an additional and increased guarantee of peace. Just as the army prevented any wanton interruption of the

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course of Germany's Continental policy, so the navy prevented any interruption in the development of our world policy. As long as we had no navy, our rapidly growing world economic interests, which are also inalienably bound up with our national economic interests, presented a vulnerable surface to our opponents. By protecting this weak point, and also rendering a naval attack on the Empire an undertaking of great risk for the enemy, we preserved not only the peace of our own country, but also that of Europe. We were concerned with the acquirement of means of defence, not of attack. After entering the ranks of the Sea Powers we continued quietly on the same course as heretofore. The new era of unbounded German world policy, which was so often foretold abroad, has not dawned. But we certainly had acquired the means of effectively protecting our interests, of resisting aggression, and of maintaining and developing our position everywhere, especially in Asia Minor, the Far East, and Africa.

As our problems in world politics increased, the web of our international relations had to be extended. Distant oversea States, which at the time of our purely Continental policy concerned us but little, grew of more and more importance to us. It became the most significant duty of our foreign policy to cultivate good and, if possible, friendly relations with these. This refers primarily to the two new Great Powers of the West and the East, the United States of America and Japan. In both cases we had to overcome temporary differences before there could be any question of entering into friendly relations.

## The Manila Incident

During the Spanish-American War a section of German public opinion manifested strong sympathy with Spain, which was naturally resented in the States. German relations with America had also been clouded by the way in which part of the English and American Press had interpreted certain incidents which had occurred between our squadrons and the American fleet off Manila. This difference reached its height in February, 1899, so that it seemed desirable strongly to advocate preparations for a better understanding between the two nations of kindred race. What I said on this point in the Reichstag has subsequently proved true. "From the point of view of a common-sense policy, there is no reason why the best relations should not subsist between Germany and America. I see no single point in which the German and American interests are opposed, nor any in the future where, in the course of their development, they are likely to clash."

More than anyone else the Emperor William II. manifested this understanding of the United States. It was he who first paved the way for our friendly and sound relations. He won over the Americans by his consistently friendly and sympathetic attitude. He was bound to President Roosevelt by ties of personal friendship. The mission of Prince Henry to America was crowned with complete success. It contributed very largely to making both nations realise how many common interests united them, and how few real differences divided them. It was a happy thought of the Emperor's, too, to knit the two Germanic nations together intellectually, by the exchange of teachers of repute in the German and American Universities. Ger-

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man intellect, poetry, philosophy, and science have met nowhere with more sincere admiration than in the United States. On the other hand Germany, more than any other country, studied and welcomed the wonderful technical inventions of America. This intimate exchange of ideas in the field of intellectual and scientific achievement found its outward manifestation in the arrangements for exchanging professors.

These ties between the two nations and their rulers, as they grew closer, promoted a friendly political relation between us and the United States. Not only did we settle the question of Samoa amicably, but during the critical period through which our country passed at the beginning of the new century America never once opposed our policy. With the exception of Austria, there is probably no country where existing circumstances contribute so naturally to permanent friendly relations with us as in North America. About 10,000,000 Germans live in the United States. Since the formation of the "Deutsch-Amerikanische Nationalbund" (National German-American Union) in 1910, they are animated more and more by the desire to maintain and encourage a close connection with their old German home, while at the same time remaining perfectly loyal to their adopted country.

[This attachment to our country of our compatriots in America has hitherto stood the test of the present war. None the less, on the other hand, it has become apparent how strong, nay, passionate, is the devotion to their mother country of those citizens of the United States who are of English extraction. One amongst many results of the world war has been the

## American Sympathies

quicken<sup>ing</sup> and strengthening of the feeling of solidarity among the Anglo-Saxons. Since the outbreak of the world war the whole English-speaking world, in so far as it belongs to the Anglo-Saxon race, and even beyond those limits, is opposed to us. Considering the numerical superiority of the Anglo-Americans, who occupy nearly all government posts and public positions, it was unavoidable that in the event of a war between Germany and England, the bulk of American sympathy should incline to the English side, and that the official policy of America should follow the lead of the major part of public opinion. In June, 1915, the New York correspondent of a great Berlin newspaper wrote: "An estrangement has supervened between Germany and America, which we shall be unable to bridge for many years." Germany has suffered bitterly from the biased and hostile attitude of public men and officials in America during the war. The want of consideration, even in outward forms, evinced towards us in these quarters in the course of the differences which arose on submarine warfare, was such as we had never before experienced, and is probably unique in the history of diplomatic relations between two great countries.

It is easy to understand the indignation now felt in wide circles in Germany against the American people who had for so long been regarded as our true friends. Such indignation is justified, and is by no means diminished by the fact that America, making the most of the present state of the world's markets, is on the eve of becoming the wealthiest country on earth. In the monthly report of one of the big New York banks, dated July, 1915, it was stated that the war

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business of the United States after less than a year of warfare surpassed everything that had hitherto been known. The report runs as follows: "America is the only country in the world whose bank position has grown steadily stronger. Gold is flowing to us from every quarter of the globe, the imports of the last six months breaking all records in our financial history." The report reaches its climax in the words: "The situation is absolutely unprecedented and merits the careful study of every thoughtful American." I should like to add: and of every thoughtful European. Such a song of triumph has seldom if ever been heard as that of the American financial secretary at the end of 1915, when with a pitying glance towards "Europe, decimated and impoverished" by the world war, he spoke with smug self-satisfaction of the unparalleled prosperity of American trade since the beginning of the war. Nevertheless, it will be to the mutual advantage of Germany and America to resume normal economic relations later on. This will be possible if the policy of both countries is directed by cool-headed, steady men, and if neither exaggerated expressions of friendship and pointless subservience, nor vacillation and nervousness are indulged in should occasional differences arise. Respect for each other, on the basis and within the limits of self-respect, will be the best means of assuring friendly relations between the United States and ourselves.]

Our relations with Japan, as with the United States of America, had passed through a period of strain towards the end of the nineteenth century. Up to the beginning of the 'nineties we had served as a model for the Japanese and had been their friend; the Japanese

## The Far East in 1895

boasted that they were the Prussians of the East. Our relations with them received a shock when, in 1895, we together with France and Russia [with whom we had formed *ad hoc* a sort of Far Eastern triple alliance] forced victorious Japan to reduce her demands on China. When we thus interfered with Japan we lost much of the sympathy which she had for many years accorded us, and we did not earn particular gratitude from France and Russia. A picture drawn by the German Emperor's scheme, which was only to have served the ideals of peace, was eagerly and successfully taken advantage of by our antagonists and competitors to injure us with the Japanese. By dint of prolonged efforts we succeeded [during the next ten years] in reviving a better state of feeling towards Germany in Japan.

It was not to our interest to have [the Japanese nation] for an enemy. On the other hand, we had no intention, of course, of allowing Japan to use us as a cat's paw. It would have very considerably facilitated matters not only for Japan but also for England if, for the sake of their interests in the Far East, we had allowed ourselves to be thrust forward against Russia. We ourselves should have fared badly in the matter. Just as we did not welcome the idea of offending and estranging Japan for the sake of France and Russia, we did not care to fall out with Russia on account of the interests in the Far East of other Powers.

Towards the end of the 'eighties Prince Bismarck once said to me, with reference to Russia and Asia : "In Russia there is a very serious amount of unrest and agitation, which may easily result in an explosion.

## **Imperial Germany**

It would be best for the peace of the world if the explosion took place in Asia and not in Europe. We must be careful not to stand just in the way, otherwise we may have to bear the brunt of it." If we had allowed ourselves to be thrust forward against Russia before the Russo-Japanese War, we should have had to bear the brunt. I also heard him say on some occasion : "If Mr. N. proposes something to you that would be useful to him and harmful to you, it does not by any means follow that Mr. N. is a fool. But you are a fool if you agree to it."

[The world war, which is impoverishing Europe, provides an opportunity which Japan is turning to her advantage. Not only does she profit in the same manner as, though to a lesser extent than, the United States by supplying war material, but she is getting a free hand in Asia, and at the same time both England and Russia set increasing store by her friendship. She has gained possession of our finest and most promising colony. Through their attack on Tsingtau the Japanese have lost the sympathy that we felt for them so long. It will lie with the Japanese to win back the confidence of the German Empire after its victory in the world war.]

## CHAPTER V

### EARLY DAYS OF WORLD POWER

IF Germany, after attaining the great aim of her Continental policy, was in a position, with her largely increased and steadily increasing powers, to reach out into the wide world, that by no means implied that we are at liberty to expend the whole of our national strength on enterprises outside the Continent of Europe.

The transition to world politics opened out to us new political courses and discovered to us new national problems; but it did not imply the abandonment of all our old courses, or a fundamental change in our tasks. Our new world policy was to be an extension, not a shifting of the field of our political activities.

We must never forget that the consolidation of our position as a Great Power in Europe has made it possible for us to transform our industrial activity from a national into a world activity, and our Continental policy into a world policy. Our world policy is based upon the successes of our European policy. The moment the firm foundation constituted by Germany's position as a Great European Power begins to totter, the whole fabric of our world policy will collapse. It is quite possible that a defeat in our world policy might leave our position in Europe unchanged; but it is unthinkable that a sensible diminution of power and influence in Europe would leave our position in world politics un-

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shaken. We can only pursue our world policy on the basis of our European policy. The conservation of our position of power on the Continent is still, as it was in Bismarck's day, the first and last aim of our national policy. [This applies as well to the guarantees which must be one of the conditions of peace. Unless our position in Europe be assured and strengthened, we cannot profit by the acquisition of colonies.]

Even if, at the behest of our national necessities, we have advanced beyond Bismarck in international affairs, nevertheless we must always maintain the principles of his European policy as the firm ground on which we take our stand. The new era must be rooted in the traditions of the old. A healthy development may in this case, too, be ensured by a common-sense compromise between the old and the new, between preservation and progress. To have renounced world politics would have been equivalent to condemning our national vitality to slow but sure decay. An adventurous world policy, which should leave out of account our old European interests, might at first have seemed attractive and impressive, but it would soon have led to a crisis if not a catastrophe in our development.

Sound political success is achieved much in the same way as mercantile success; by keeping a steady course between the Scylla of over-carefulness and the Charybdis of speculation.

"The basis of a sound and sensible world policy is a strong, national home policy." So I said in December, 1901, when a member of the Reichstag, Eugen Richter, tried to prove that the policy, which underlay the new tariff and aimed at the protection of home

## **Politics and History**

industries and especially agrarian interests, was antagonistic to the new world policy which was founded on the interests of commerce. The apparent antagonism between the two was really a compromise; for German industrial activity in the international field had had its origin in the extremely flourishing condition of home industries.

The connection between politics and national industry is far closer in our times than it was in the past. The home and foreign policies of modern States react directly upon the fluctuations and changes of their very highly developed industrial life, and every considerable industrial interest ultimately finds political expression in one way or another. World commerce, with all the various vital interests depending on it, has made our world policy a necessity. Our industrial activities at home demand a corresponding home policy. Between the two, some compromise must be sought and found.

Seven years after the tariff debates the worth of this compromise between the home policy and world policy, which was much discussed then in political and industrial circles, was proved in the sphere of international politics on the occasion of the Bosnian crisis in the year 1908. This event demonstrates more clearly than any academic discussion could do the real relation in which our oversea policy and our European policy stand to one another. German policy, up to the time when the Bosnian question was raised, was mainly controlled by consideration of our world policy. Not that Germany directed her foreign relations in accordance with her oversea interests, but that England's displeasure at the development of German

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foreign trade and especially at the growth of German sea power, influenced the grouping of the Powers and their attitude towards the German Empire. Ever since we began to build our fleet public opinion amongst the English has at times given way to fear of a German invasion; and this fear was so groundless and so senseless that it almost amounted to a panic. This, moreover, was systematically encouraged by a large section of the English Press which has a very powerful and widespread influence.

During my term of office I was convinced that a conflict between Germany and England would never come to pass:—

- i. If we built a fleet which could not be attacked without very grave risk to the attacking party.
- ii. If we did not, beyond that, indulge in undue and unlimited shipbuilding and armaments, and did not overheat our marine boiler.
- iii. If we did not allow England to injure our reputation or our dignity,
- iv. but if we did nothing to make an irremediable breach between us and England. That is why I always solemnly refuted indecorous attacks, such as the offensive remarks of Mr. Joseph Chamberlain in January, 1902, which were calculated to hurt our national sensibilities, no matter whence they came, but resisted all temptations to interfere in the Boer War, as that would have dealt English self-esteem a wound that would not heal.
- v. If we kept calm and cool, and neither affronted England nor ran after her.

Since the beginning of the new century the influ-

## Aim of Edward VII

ence of King Edward VII. had made itself felt in English foreign politics. He was a monarch of extraordinary insight into the character of men, who knew to a nicety the art of handling them, and had wide and varied experience. His policy did not so much aim at directly opposing the interests of Germany as at gradually checkmating her by shifting the Balance of Power in Europe. By a series of *ententes*, for the sake of which considerable British interests were several times sacrificed, he sought to attach to England the other States of Europe, and so to isolate Germany. It was the period of the so-called English *Einkreissung Politik*.<sup>1</sup> With Spain she concluded a treaty with reference to the Mediterranean. France, of course, was well disposed towards the opponent of the German Empire, and the Franco-British treaty about Egypt and Morocco in the year 1904 drove the memory of Fashoda into the background.

Russia also drew near to England, for owing to the after-effects of the heavy losses by land and at sea that she had sustained in her war with Japan, and also because of serious disturbances at home, she had decided to come to an arrangement with England about their respective spheres of interest in Asia. Italy was eagerly wooed. Similar attempts with regard to Austro-Hungary, on the occasion of the meeting of the monarchs at Ischl, failed, thanks to the unswerving loyalty to his ally of the aged Emperor, Franz Joseph. In Algeciras, although Germany defended her own national interests as part and parcel of the general international interests, she had a hard fight against

<sup>1</sup> Policy of isolation.

## Imperial Germany

the French demands which had England's support. At that time the policy of encirclement to all appearances succeeded with regard to the grouping of the Powers; and yet the aims of German policy in respect of Morocco were practically fulfilled by the very fact that the conference was called, and by the more important decisions it made. The question now was, how the system of *ententes* would work in the sphere of purely European politics.

The final annexation by Austro-Hungary of the provinces of Bosnia and Herzegovina, which, in accordance with the decisions of the Berlin Congress, Austria had occupied since 1878, led to a great European crisis. Russia opposed these proceedings on the part of Austria. Believing that an armed settlement of the old Austro-Russian rivalry in the Balkans was at hand, Servia, whose plans for aggrandisement would be thwarted, thought herself entitled to prepare for war against the Danube Monarchy. England sided with Russia, and the language of the English Press was almost more impassioned than the utterances of the Russians. The antagonistic policy of England seemed aimed less against Austria than against Germany, Austria's ally. For the first time the Austro-German alliance was to prove its durability and strength in a serious conflict.

In my speeches in the Reichstag, as in my instructions to our representatives abroad, I made it quite clear that Germany was resolved to preserve her alliance with Austria at any cost. The German sword was thrown into the scale of European decision, directly in support of our Austro-Hungarian ally, in-

# Was Germany Checkmated?

directly for the preservation of European peace, and above all for the sake of German credit and the maintenance of our position in the world.

The hour had now arrived by which it would be made manifest whether Germany really had been checkmated by the policy of isolation, and whether the Powers that had been drawn into the circle of Anti-German policy would find it consistent with their vital interests in Europe to take up a hostile attitude towards the German Empire and its allies. The course of the Bosnian crisis, in point of fact, made an end of the encircling policy of Edward VII. No Power was willing to subordinate its own European interests to the international interests of foreigners, or to sacrifice itself for others. [The Bosnian crisis caused no outbreak of war, nor did it seriously injure our relations with Russia.] The group of Powers whose influence had been so much overestimated at Algeciras, fell to pieces when faced with the tough problems of Continental policy. Italy sided with her allies, France awaited events and assumed an attitude not unfriendly to Germany, and the Emperor Nicholas decided on a friendly settlement of the existing difficulties. The ingenious encirclement of Germany, for some time the terror of timid souls, proved to be a diplomatic illusion devoid of political actuality. The Belgian Minister in Berlin, [Baron Greindl, summed up the results of this diplomatic campaign by which we secured a considerable victory, while at the same time the peace of the world remained undisturbed. After the Bosnian crisis was over, he wrote to his Government on April 1, 1909 : "The proposals made by Sir Edward Grey and M.

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Iswolski, to hold a conference, and the negotiations concerning concerted action in Vienna, and the whole interchange of views on the part of London, Paris and St. Petersburg aimed at forcing Austro-Hungary to accept a compromise which would have been very likely a humiliation. This would have affected Germany as directly and as sensibly as Austro-Hungary, and would have dealt a severe blow to the confidence which the Austrians repose in their alliance with Germany. These intrigues were rendered nugatory by Germany's definite and resolute attitude, an attitude from which she never departed despite the pressure brought to bear upon her. Germany alone secured the maintenance of peace. The Powers belonging to the new group organised by the King of England measured their strength with that of the Allied Powers of Central Europe, and showed themselves incapable of shaking the latter's alliance." Regarding the impression which our success had made in St. Petersburg, Baron Greindl wrote that the feeling there was that the Triple Entente did not afford Russia sufficient support to enable her to forgo at least normal relations with Germany. Experience had taught Russia how ineffective was the coalition formed by King Edward the very first time it was put to the test. The Belgian chargé d'affaires in Paris reported at the same time that there was little trace left in France of the frantic enthusiasm with which the Russian alliance had originally been received.]

The fundamental error in the whole affair had been the failure to set down at its full value as a factor in the situation the importance of the German Empire as a Great Power of Europe. It was certain that if any-

## Strength of the Triple Alliance

one succeeded in dealing our position in Europe a keen blow, our world policy would have sustained a mortal wound. In that, which was one of the premises on which the policy of isolation was based, calculations were correct. But we were not so easy to wound in our Continental position. The Triple Alliance was a force against which no country would let itself be thrust forward for the sake of remote interests, even if very clever diplomacy were employed in the attempt. It was a force with which no Power would dare to wage war except as a last resort in a vital question. Last, but not least, the Continental Powers were bound by many ties of common interest which could not be subordinated to the rivalry of Germany and England at sea and in commerce. England was the only country with which Germany's account in world policy showed a balance on the wrong side. As far as all the other European Powers were concerned, the contra-account of Continental politics was the decisive factor in the attitude they assumed towards Germany. [In the course of the past months of warfare the friendship of England has been unable to counteract the dread inspired by the hostility of Germany, nor has it availed to preserve from destruction those who had built their hopes upon it. This fact shows how wisely the Continental Powers acted at the time of the Bosnian crisis, when, besides considering the community of interests they had with Germany, they allowed the fear of their German neighbour, bursting with vigour and strength, to weigh more heavily in their counsels than even those same common interests did.]

The great lesson of the Bosnian crisis was that our

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world policy rests on our Continental policy. The former brought us into conflict with England. The policy of isolation, which seemed likely to endanger our safety, was directed against the international trade and the sea power of Germany. By means of our strength as a Continental Power, we tore the web which encompassed us. The result was that a tide of sober reflection set in on the other side of the Channel, and this seemed the forerunner of a period in which a calm exchange of ideas and a sensible adjustment of interests might take place between the two nations.

In the winter of 1909, immediately after the Bosnian crisis had taken a decisive turn, King Edward VII. paid a visit to the German Emperor and Empress in Berlin. This visit passed off in a satisfactory manner, and the king had a hearty reception. He, for his part, succeeded in emphasising the favourable impression made by his visit, by repeatedly giving expression to his sincere love of peace and his warm friendship, sentiments which found corroboration soon after in the Speech from the Throne and the Debate on the Address in the English Parliament. This last visit of King Edward VII. aroused good hope for the future and shed a pleasant light, not only on the personal relations of the King with Germany, but also on those between two great nations who had every reason to respect one another, and to vie with each other amicably in the work of peace. The attempt to extend the opposition between England and Germany into a system of combined international policy [was not repeated until 1914.]

[The alliance between the three great Powers of Central Europe was founded entirely upon Germany's

## A Guarantee of Peace

strong position in Continental politics.] European history has seldom, if ever, seen an alliance of such strength and durability as the Triple Alliance. In the year 1879 Bismarck concluded the alliance with Austro-Hungary; in 1883 Italy joined it. For thirty years the treaties of alliance were regularly renewed, and there was never any ground for the hopes of its ill-wishers and the fears of its well-wishers with regard to the durability of the Triple Alliance. In so far as a term of party politics can be applied to international politics, which, of course, differ completely in aim, cause, and effect, one may characterise the Triple Alliance as one with emphatically conservative tendencies. Herein, probably, the chief cause of its strength must be sought. It was neither desire of conquest nor unsatisfied ambition that brought the States of the Triple Alliance together, and kept them united. The three mid-European States were bound to each other by the firm resolve to maintain the existing balance of power in Europe, and should a forcible change be attempted, to prevent it if need be by force. The united strength of Middle Europe stood in the path of any revolution—any European policy which might elect to follow the courses pursued by Louis XIV. or Napoleon I. This alliance was like a mighty fortification dividing the Continent into two. The wish to maintain existing conditions implies, as far as international politics is concerned, a desire for peace. The founders of the Triple Alliance intentionally created a guarantee of peace. This alliance more than once in the course of the last thirty years warded off the rising danger of war.

## Imperial Germany

[Prince Bismarck, a second Hercules, accomplished many great labours in order to secure for the German people the position they deserved. If I were asked which of these is the most admirable from the point of view of foreign politics, I should say without hesitation : The wisdom and energy with which Prince Bismarck, in the face of much opposition, worked for the re-establishment of the connection with Austria, as soon as the German problem had been solved in accordance with Prussian ideas and in favour of the house of Hohenzollern. While the battlefield of Königgrätz was still darkened by the smoke from the guns, his eagle eye discovered on the horizon the possibility of co-operation on a sound basis between Germany, united under Prussian leadership, and a new independent Austro-Hungarian monarchy established in rejuvenated strength. He never departed from the rule of refraining from all interference in the home politics of the Dual Monarchy, both in Austria and in Hungary. His celebrated saying that, if the Emperor of Austria mounted his horse, all his peoples would follow him against a foreign foe, was justified by the course of events long years after it was spoken. What he said to the German-Austrians still holds good to-day : "Serve your Emperor faithfully, so shall you best serve the German Empire." He was right, too, in attaching great importance to the Magyar element as a factor in Austro-Hungary's future and in our alliance with her. In the summer of 1884, when I was about to take up my duties as chargé d'affaires in St. Petersburg, I accepted an invitation to go to Varzin, and I shall never forget the interview in which Prince Bismarck discoursed

## Attitude of Italy

upon the Balkan peoples. "For the most part," said he, "they dislike us, but that does not much matter, for God in His wisdom has ordained that they dislike each other even more." Then turning his attention to Hungary, he said: "The Hungarians are naturally keen, have a great deal of character, and are clever too. It is no small matter to maintain one's independence for centuries against such odds as they have done. For Austria they are preferable to the Slavs, for no magnet abroad attracts them. And even though there are Hungarians who grumble at the 'Suabians,' that is of small account, for vital interests make Germans and Hungarians dependent on each other to such an extent that every European crisis must unite them, and only the grossest stupidity on both sides could keep them permanently apart."]

The attitude of Italy towards the Triple Alliance has undergone many a change in the course of thirty years; these changes in Italy were due partly to internal political events, partly to the peculiar development of certain Mediterranean questions. But before the present war our opponents did not succeed in severing Italy's connection with the Triple Alliance, although at times they made pertinacious and eager attempts to do so.

The relations between Italy and Austria are naturally more complex than the terms on which we stand with Italy. The memory of the passionate struggle lasting for half a century, which the Italian people carried on against the Austrian dominion in Italy, has never faded. Such recollections were kept fresh in the mind of the nation by monuments, inscriptions,

## Imperial Germany

voluminous literature, and the fiery patriotism of the Italians. Moreover, the fact that nearly a million Italians belong to the Monarchy of the Habsburgs has always been a sore point.

[A distinguished Italian statesman, the Ambassador Count Nigra, was right when he once said to me : "Austria and Italy can only be either allies or enemies." That they should remain allies lay in the interest of both countries, especially Italy's. France is a more dangerous rival for Italy than Austria, for the wisest French statesmen have always regarded the Italophil policy of the Emperor Napoleon III. as a grave mistake, and to this very day the French are impatient of Italian competition in the Mediterranean, and they will never cease in their efforts to predominate in those waters which Napoleon I. called "*un lac français.*" If Austrian officials in Trieste and the Trentino have not always fulfilled their duties with great tact, at least the Italian element in the population of both places has lived there for centuries unmolested, whereas the Serbians and Croatians on the Adriatic coast wage war to the knife against the Italians, and have in many cases driven them away; and the whole world knows how badly heterogeneous elements of the population are wont to fare under Russian rule or Russian influence.

As for England, there is widespread sympathy in Italy for this country, which once helped the Italian national movement, and whose institutions served as models for the Italians during their struggles for liberation. Nevertheless, it was short-sighted of the Italians to let their feelings run away with them; they should realise that England, in the course of her policy, has

## Anglo-French Intrigues

often cleverly made others serve her purpose, but has hardly ever sacrificed herself for another's sake. The insolent egotism with which England denies her Italian ally coal and cotton, two things which are necessities for the latter, put Italian patience to a hard test. Italy and Germany were clearly dependent upon one another for many and weighty reasons: the absence of all rivalry between the nations, and—since the memory of the struggle in the Teutoburger Wald and of the Battle of Legnano has grown faint—the absence of any disturbing reminiscence, the similarity of their historical development and the existence of common dangers which might threaten them in the same ways. It required nine months of intrigue on the part of the French and the English before the influence of this community of interests was undermined, for it had its foundation in the very nature of things, and was as clear from the point of view of history as from that of practical politics.]

Our relations with Italy were, contrary to the accepted view of the character of the two nations, regarded by us from the sentimental, and by the Italians from the common-sense, point of view. We were apt at times to take too unfavourable view of these relations and at times to value them too highly from an excess of sentimentality. Neither at Algeciras, nor on account of her Tripoli expedition, nor shortly before, at the interview at Racconigi, did Italy contemplate severing her connection with us. In a few minor questions Italy voted at Algeciras with the Western Powers and against us. This was cleverly taken up by the French Press, and presented to the world as an indication

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that Italy would renounce the Triple Alliance and enter into friendly relations with France. In other and more important questions, Italy supported our point of view at Algeciras, and furthered our wishes. Our representative at Algeciras, Herr von Radowitz, always recognised this, and repeatedly did battle against what he was convinced were unjust attacks upon Italy's attitude at the conference. It was in pursuance of his wish that in the Reichstag in November, 1906, I combated the reproaches that were cast upon Italy. Later, too, Herr von Radowitz expressed his opinion of the Italian delegates, to the following effect: that perhaps so far as appearances went they had been too anxious to place Franco-Italian relations in the most favourable light possible, but that in actual fact they had rendered us good service. The contrary opinion has just as little foundation as the widespread belief in Russia, that at the Berlin Congress Bismarck cheated and betrayed the Russians.

Italy most certainly had interests that lie outside the sphere of the Triple Alliance. We ourselves had interests beyond the scope of Triple Alliance policy, and Austria did not lack them either. Prince Bismarck sharply emphasised this fact at times. The Triple Alliance would not have remained intact so long if it had demanded from the allied Powers absolute community in all their enterprises and in all the courses of their policy.

By way of comparison, a fact of the internal political constitution of our State may be applied, *cum grano salis*, to characterise the Triple Alliance. Just as the German Empire gains in security and stability because its

## An Asset to Italy

constitution, while requiring absolute obedience in all great national and political questions, leaves the single States free to deal with their own narrower problems, so the Triple Alliance [according to the frequently and emphatically expressed opinion of its founder] united the three Great Powers of Middle Europe on the great aim of Continental politics for which the Alliance was founded, but left them absolute freedom in the pursuit of their particular national interests. The existence of Italy, Austria and Germany is rooted in European politics, and their roots are many and were firmly intertwined. But the branches of the trees were to be able to spread freely in every direction. The Triple Alliance was not intended to act as the shears which check free growth without cogent reason.

[Thus the Triple Alliance existed for more than thirty years, and it proved of greater value to Italy than to the Central Powers. Relying on the Triple Alliance, which safeguarded her interests in Europe, Italy was able to devote her attention to colonial politics, and could count on the support of her allies to consolidate her successes.

Ever since the Triple Alliance was concluded there have been politicians who refused to recognise the value of Italy's participation.] Their hesitation arose from a doubt as to whether Italy would be able and willing to go hand in hand with Austria and us in every possible complication of international politics. Even if these fears were justified, this was no final argument against the value of Italy's participation in the Triple Alliance. Supposing Italy were not able in every conceivable circumstance to go to all lengths with Austria and us,

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and if we and Austria likewise were not able to support Italy in all complications of international politics, even then each one of the three Powers was, by virtue of the existing alliance, prevented for a long time from assisting the enemy of the others. That is what Prince Bismarck meant when he once remarked that it was sufficient for him that an Italian corporal with the Italian flag and a drummer beside him should array themselves against the West, i.e. France, and not against the East, i.e. Austria.

In the event of a dispute in Europe everything else depended on how the question was put. The full and true value of an alliance can only be tested in a grave crisis. [As far as political foresight can tell, one may say that Italy will find that she made a mistake when, breaking away from the Triple Alliance, she threw in her lot with our enemies; this course was opposed to the traditions and ideas of many of her best statesmen, from Cavour to Crispi, and, moreover, it cannot be defended from the point of view of practical politics. I will not discuss the question as to whether and how the Italians might have been prevented at the beginning of the war from deserting their allies. It would have been chiefly to the advantage of Italy if a breach with Austria had been avoided. Will Italy gain by her new alliance what she has given up with the old? Italy's most important interests lie in the Mediterranean; these have always been regarded with cool indifference by England and with traditional jealousy by France; as for Russia, she has always regarded them with frank hostility both on account of her desire for the Dardanelles and because of Serbian pretensions on the eastern shore of the

## The Wooing of Islam

Adriatic Sea. Will these things change now? Would Italy not have done better to stand aside from a war which has cost her hecatombs of human lives and millions of money, without hitherto enabling her to gain even a fraction of what she might have got in a friendly way from Austria? Of course, we should have preferred it, if Austria had been able to employ on the Eastern front the considerable forces she now opposes to Italy. Italy did not declare war on Austria until the battle in the Carpathians, which had lasted for months, had been decided against the Russians by the fact that the Austro-German forces broke through on the Dunajek and the military situation of the Central Powers had thus turned in our favour.]

We have carefully cultivated good relations with Turkey and Islam, especially since the journey to the East undertaken by our Emperor and Empress. These relations were not of a sentimental nature, for the continued existence of Turkey served our interests from the industrial, military and political points of view. [I might sum up my policy towards Turkey by saying that my efforts were directed towards securing a support in the East, by a well-organised and independent Turkey. For that reason I tried to shield the Turkish Empire from injury, mediated between her and the Balkan States, prevented concerted action on the part of these States against Turkey, warned the latter against imprudent proceedings in Albania and Arabia, and saw no reason why we should not be on equally good terms with the Young Turks as with the Sultan Abdul Hamid.] Industrially and financially, Turkey offered us a rich and fertile field of activity, to

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which Rodbertus and Friedrich List had already drawn attention, and which we have cultivated with much profit.

[The present time shows that, in addition to this, the military strength of Turkey is an important factor, and that the Osmanli race has preserved intact the soldierly virtues which it so often displayed in the past. By the loyal and prudent policy which made her take her stand beside us from the very first, and by the power of resistance she showed in meeting the attack of the three Allies, Turkey has given proof that the "sick man" of the Emperor Nicholas I. is still full of vigour, now that the latter's great-grandson reigns, sixty years after the Crimean War. For a long time Turkey was an important link in the chain of our political relations, but our connection with her will be of even greater importance to us after the war. The trouble expended on Turco-German relations in the past finds ample reward in the present, and may bear still better fruit for us, as for our Turkish Ally, in the future. Turkey, strengthened and rejuvenated by the attitude she has adopted in this war, has stood firm in the Dardanelles and on the Tigris, and has proved anew to the world her right to exist as a strong and independent State; hers will be the great task of mediating between the East and the West.

It had always seemed to me to be wise to cultivate friendly relations with all the Balkan States, in so far as this did not injure Turkish interests. During the six years which I spent as German Minister in Bucharest, I had the opportunity of seeing what astonishing progress Roumania had made in the last half-

## The Position of Greece

century under the guidance of King Carol, one of the wisest and most successful rulers in history. Roumania can do nothing more efficacious to maintain her great position than to cultivate with care her friendly and confidential relations with her Hungarian neighbour. Hungary and Roumania are interdependent for this, if for no other reason, that they neither of them belong to the Slav race, and that they both have only one real enemy, Panslavism. This same enemy threatens the sturdy Bulgarian people who, led by a monarch of great political astuteness, have proved to be exceptionally capable *in utraque fortuna*—in good fortune and in bad—and who have a great future before them. Plato once said of the old Greeks that they sat around the Mediterranean as frogs around a pond. The present-day Greeks, owing to their intellectual energy and their inventiveness, are an important factor on the shores of that beautiful sea. There was a time when the Serbians, who caught the attention of Goethe and Ranke, sought their education in Germany, and until the present war they did their best to make their economic relations with us profitable. The Serbians have allowed themselves to be lured to destruction by the Panslavist tempter, and are paying the penalty now with their property and their lives.]

## CHAPTER VI

### RUSSIA AND FRANCE

FRIENDLY relations with the Empire of the Tsars was a legacy bequeathed to the new German Empire by Prussia. Russia and Prussia have hardly ever been antagonists, if we except the time of the Empress Elizabeth's hatred of Frederick the Great, a hatred based on personal rather than material grounds, and of the mock war between Russia and Prussia in 1812. The difficult task of dividing Poland certainly gave rise to some temporary friction, but it did not result in any serious conflict of views. Indeed, the Polish affair often brought Russia and Prussia into closer touch. [The possession of Polish territories acquired by the division of Poland was] a warning to both these countries not to quarrel, but to look on their common efforts to ward off attempts at re-establishing the independence of Poland as a bridge on which Russia and Prussia could continue to meet.

During the first half of the nineteenth century the relations between the ruling houses of Russia and Prussia were more intimate than is usual; and this intimacy found expression in the policy of the two countries. In the dark times of the Crimean War Prussia's friendly attitude considerably eased Russia's position; and a counterpart to this is found in the attitude which the Emperor Alexander II. adopted dur-

## The Berlin Congress

ing the Franco-German War. [Arguments have often arisen as to whether we are more indebted to the Russians, or they to us. The amount of the debt between the two States has often varied. Whether the Russians rendered us more valuable assistance in 1813-14, 1866 and 1870-71, or we were of greater use to them during the Crimean War, the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-78 and the Russo-Japanese War, can, of course, not be determined with mathematical accuracy, and such a calculation, even if it were possible, could serve no useful political purpose. A too greatly emphasised debt of gratitude is even more irksome to a nation than to a private individual, and the debtor tries to rid himself of the burden.] When, not long after the Peace of Frankfurt was signed, in September, 1872, the Emperors of Russia and Austria went to the capital of the new German Empire to visit the venerable sovereign who had emerged victorious from the great struggle, Prince Bismarck had created a new basis for European policy. The united strength of the empires of Eastern Europe cooled the French nation's ardour for revenge; indeed, this union was an excellent guarantee of peace. Bismarck also expected that the closer connection of Russia with the conservative tendencies of Germany and Austria's foreign policy would stem the tide of Panslavism which at that time was rapidly rising in Russia. As he expressed it: "Russia, the wild elephant, was to walk between the two tame elephants, Germany and Austria."

The Berlin Congress, 1878, occasioned a slight rift in the hitherto unbroken concord of the Powers of Eastern Europe. After the heavy losses of a long and

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unexpectedly difficult campaign, Russia, who had not cared to risk the occupation of Constantinople, had to submit in Berlin to considerable modifications of the Peace of San Stefano. These alterations in their essentials may be traced back to secret arrangements made by the St. Petersburg Cabinet with Austria before the war against Turkey, and with England at the conclusion of an armistice. The results of the Berlin Congress were hardly satisfactory from the point of view of the Russian people; and the Russian Press, which in the last decade had greatly strengthened its influence on public opinion, put all the blame on Prince Bismarck, the chairman of the Congress and its most distinguished member. The Russian Imperial Chancellor, Prince Gortschakov, whose personal relations with Prince Bismarck had become gradually more and more unfriendly, not only gave free rein to the Press, but discussed with a French journalist the idea of a Franco-Russian Alliance, though this, of course, at the time, was nothing more than an idea. When the Emperor Alexander II. also seemed to be yielding to anti-German influences, Bismarck, in 1879, concluded the treaty of alliance with Austro-Hungary, which became the basis of the Triple Alliance. After the conclusion of this alliance, *The Times* correspondent in Paris, M. de Blowitz, a very versatile man, said to me: "That is probably the best stroke of diplomacy that Bismarck has yet achieved."

Nevertheless Prince Bismarck, with his accustomed energy, set to work to place us once more on our old footing with Russia. [In particular during the reign of the Emperor Alexander III., he pursued a policy toward

## Bismarck's Russian Policy

Russia that was based on the personality of the Tsar, and he gave as his reason for so doing the fact that, despite the dislike of Germany that had always existed in wide circles in Russia, Prussia had done good business with Alexander I., Nicholas I. and Alexander II. Before the war, as the English and French Press admit, and as their diplomats well knew, there had been important factors in Russia which favoured friendly relations with Germany. Of course, that is all done with since the war began. In some quarters the reproach was heard against Prince Bismarck, that he had not always preserved the independence of German policy and the dignity of the German nation in his dealings with Russia. Such reproaches are as childish as they are unjust.

Prince Bismarck was, indeed, convinced that Germany had an interest in preserving calm and secure relations with her neighbour in the East. Even the extensive and apparently threatening military preparations of Russia and her concentration of troops on our Eastern frontier in the 'eighties did not avail to shake this conviction of his. He spoke openly of this in public, with least reserve in his speech in the Reichstag on February 6, 1888. More than once, too, he hinted that he had no wish to burden his policy with desires for revenge on the part of Russia, in addition to those which the French cherished. Also in consideration of England's position, Prince Bismarck did not wish a definite quarrel with Russia, because, if England should become our avowed and permanent enemy, we should chain her to Russia; and if we left ourselves no possibility of an understanding with Russia, we

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should thereby facilitate England's policy and secure her standing in the world. Soon after the conclusion of the Austro-German alliance he actually] succeeded in materially improving Russo-German relations, and, what is more, the meeting of the three Emperors at Skierniewice, in 1884, led to a new *rapprochement* of the three Empires.

The peace of Europe was assured in an almost ideal fashion by the Triple Alliance on the one hand and the *entente* of the Powers of Eastern Europe on the other. But from the very first a limit was set to this ideal state of affairs by the many antagonistic aims of Russian and Austrian policy in the East. It was only a question of time that this antagonism should become manifest, for it did not depend on the goodwill or illwill of statesmen, but on differences in the very real political interests of the two Empires.

It was the Bulgarian question which again upset the good relations between Austria and Russia. The friendly understanding of the three Empires did not survive the stormy summer of 1886. It is well known that Prince Bismarck himself declared that in the face of the new situation he had done his best, while remaining loyal to the Triple Alliance, to preserve a friendly understanding between Germany and Russia. To this end he had assured a more or less exceptional position for German policy behind the defensive position of the Triple Alliance, by means of the so-called Re-insurance Treaty with Russia. Later on he spoke frequently about the motives that had induced him to conclude the treaty, and about the value and bearing of the same. [This subject was treated most fully in that

## The Reinsurance Treaty

article in the *Hamburger Nachrichten* of October 24, 1896, which, as we now know, was directly inspired by him.] He blamed his successor for not renewing the treaty, and he pointed out that it was after this failure to renew that the Franco-Russian Alliance was concluded automatically. Russia, no longer bound by any convention, and France in her isolation had joined forces, after the dividing wall between them had been removed. Prince Bismarck considered this change on the part of Russia, from the side of the German Empire, to that of the bitterest enemy of Germany, a great strengthening of France's position among the Powers, and one which would materially increase the difficulties of German policy. [He always emphatically denied that the Reinsurance Treaty with Russia was an act of unfriendliness toward Austria. Both in conversation and in utterances in the *Hamburger Nachrichten*, the great statesman repeatedly declared that he had always clearly realised that it was to Germany's interest that the integrity of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy should be preserved, but that the maintenance of peace in Europe was as important for Austria as for Germany.

For these reasons Prince Bismarck thought it his duty, as he said in his never-to-be-forgotten speech in the Reichstag on February 6, 1888, to prevent Europe from being plunged into a war that would reach from Moscow to the Pyrenees, and from the North Sea to Palermo, the result of which no man could foresee, and after the conclusion of which, as he expressed it, one would hardly know why one had been fighting. Prince Bismarck considered that his greatest achievement in foreign politics was the prevention of a coalition war

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against us, and up to the conclusion of his term of office he was unwearied in his efforts to avoid such a catastrophe. In 1896, shortly before the end of his days, in an interview with the chief editor of the *Hamburger Nachrichten*, he said that Austria too must desire to avoid a war that would exact the most monstrous sacrifices of life, money and power from all the Continental nations. Therefore the German Reinsurance Treaty with Russia had also been in Austria's interest, since it had served to assure the peace of the world. It was characteristic of Prince Bismarck that, in any relation of alliance with another State, he should claim to take the lead, and would never follow in the wake of another. Talleyrand used to say that every alliance resembled the relationship between a horse and his rider, but he always added : "*Quant à moi, je préfère faire le cavalier.*"<sup>1</sup> Prince Bismarck was of the same opinion.]

At any rate the Anglo-Russian Alliance denoted a very significant change in the international situation. In the 'nineties we Germans had to face British rivalry, roused by the rapid development of German foreign trade and the construction of the German fleet, while we were taken in the rear by the Dual Alliance, by which France desired to profit as much as possible in order to realise her hopes. Thus placed, we had to seek and find a transition to world politics. At first this was a narrow path along which we had to advance with great care. Our attitude towards Russia during the Russo-Japanese War was modelled on our relations with England during the Boer War. Without injury to our duty of strictly proper neutrality towards Japan,

<sup>1</sup> For my part, I prefer to be the rider.

## The Dual Alliance

we adopted a very friendly attitude towards Russia. Indeed, our neutrality with respect to Russia was even a shade more kindly than that of France.

After the Russo-Japanese War there was a slight coolness in Franco-Russian relations, whereas there was an increase of warmth in those between Russia and Germany. The Dual Alliance had gradually lost a great deal of its original keenness of edge, not so much on account of the weakening of Russia, which, as was the case after the Crimean War, was often exaggerated, as on account of the restoration of confidence between Russia and Germany. The various stages of this re-establishment of friendly relations were marked by the repeated meetings between monarchs of the two Empires. After the Bosnian crisis, too, normal relations between Russia and Germany were quickly restored, as was proved by the particularly satisfactory meeting between the Emperor William and the Tsar, which took place amongst the islands off the coast of Finland in June, 1909. [As Bismarck's Re-insurance Treaty had not been renewed, it] did not lie in Germany's power to separate Russia from France, nor could she harbour any intention of so doing. Since a treaty of alliance had been concluded between Russia and France, and had penetrated the national sentiments of the two peoples, it had become impossible, and would for some time to come continue to be impossible, for us to sever the ties of this alliance, and bind Russia to our interests by means of a treaty.

But Germany could blunt the keen edge of the Dual Alliance by putting her relations with Russia on a sound basis. It was possible to accomplish this task,

## Imperial Germany

and for a long time it was done. Its accomplishment was rendered considerably easier by the personal relations subsisting between our Emperor and the Emperor Nicholas. The hopes built by the French chauvinists on the Russian Alliance were not fulfilled for twenty-four years. At times Russian statesmen even gave France to understand that Russia was not willing to serve the cause of the French policy of revenge. The high hopes with which the French acclaimed the conclusion of the Dual Alliance gradually faded. The French authorities were forced to seek some compensation for their disappointed hopes, for the sake of the sentiments and aspirations which ultimately control public feeling in France. They found this compensation in the Anglo-French entente, which at times seemed a greater menace to us than the Dual Alliance. The resentment of the French against the rulers of Alsace-Lorraine sought and found an ally in the widespread disquietude and jealousy of the English, which increased in proportion as our navy grew and our oversea interests developed.

The Dual Alliance completely lacked any permanent interests hostile to the German Empire which are common to the two Powers. There is probably no European Power which so rarely stood in the way of Russia's claims in the spheres of politics and industry as Germany. [Of course that has changed since a terrible war has broken out between Russia and us. We now have the right, and moreover it is our duty, to demand solid guarantees that East Prussia, the province which in the course of centuries has suffered more than any other from enemy invasions, shall not in future

## Russia of the Future

be exposed to barbarous devastation. King Ludwig III. was the mouthpiece of the Bavarian and the German peoples when he said that we required a peace that would ensure for us many decades of tranquillity. Such enormous sacrifices must not be made in vain. Since we are now on bad terms with Russia, we need very considerably increased security in the East. As matters now stand, this security can only subsist in a rectification of our unfavourable Eastern frontiers, which will safeguard us from new invasions.

Of course we cannot desire that Russia should regain her strength. But we shall have to reckon with this contingency, because of the huge increase of the Russian population, in which the excess of births is far greater than amongst us, and because of the homogeneity of the mass of the people, both as regards race and religion—unless, indeed, Russia falls a victim to political or social disintegration or else loses the Ukraine, her granary and the foundation of her industry. Whether the loss of parts of Poland would weaken Russia is questionable. Before our relations with Russia were irremediably damaged, we were justified in cultivating them with care. Russian and German interests did not come into direct conflict anywhere. Moreover, Germany was the country to which Russia sent most of her exports, and from which she obtained most of her imports.] Conflicting interests between England and France are certainly not wanting either. Up to quite recent times England's greatest and most important acquisitions in the wider world were made at the expense of France; this was the case in the Sudan, and earlier in Further India.

## Imperial Germany

But for France oversea politics are not vital, and therefore she was at liberty to subordinate her international interests to England's, thereby circumscribing Franco-British differences for the sake of an Anglo-French agreement. France paid this high price for England's friendship after she had been disappointed in her hopes of the Dual Alliance. The resentment against Germany might well be called the soul of French policy; the other international questions are more of a material nature and only concern the body.

[No hopelessly conflicting interests separated us from either England or Russia until August, 1914. The encounters we had had with Russia in the Seven Years' War, and in 1812, had left no political or national animosity in their wake. England and Germany had never crossed swords. With France it was otherwise. Warfare between Germany and Russia had been merely episodic, whereas, owing to the fatality of history, Germany had for centuries been the object of France's predatory instincts. Forty-five years ago Ranke wrote to Thiers that Germany was waging war against Louis XIV.; we can with equal right say to-day that we are forced to be *en vedette* against Richelieu and Louis XIV., Napoleon and Gambetta.]

The irreconcilability of France was a factor that we had to reckon with in our political calculations. [On February 1, 1914, the French historian, Ernest Lavisse, a man of recognised scientific and political ability, wrote in his preface to the Memoirs of Auguste Lalance, the Alsatian: "*La France n'admet pas la sinistre conception bismarckienne, elle n'admet pas*

## Alsace-Lorraine

*l'argument de l'ethnographie, ni que la force suffise à créer un droit sur les âmes. Et les Allemands ne comprendront jamais, jamais que nous sommes attachés à l'Alsace-Lorraine par un devoir d'honneur.*"<sup>1</sup> In the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, the best French monthly review, another French historian, Henri Welschinger, expressed his opinion of the relation in which Germany and France stand to one another in the following words : "Il y a littéralement un abîme entre la France et l'Allemagne, et rien ne pourra le combler."<sup>2</sup> ]

It always seemed to me weakness to entertain the hope of a real and sincere reconciliation with France so long as we had no intention of giving up Alsace-Lorraine. And, of course, there was not, and is not, any such intention in Germany. There certainly were many individual points in which we could see eye to eye with France, and in which we could co-operate, at any rate, from time to time. We rightly endeavoured to preserve polite, calm, and peaceful relations with France. But beyond that we could not pursue any will-o'-the-wisp delusions, otherwise we might have met with the fate of the Astronomer in La Fontaine, who, while gazing at the stars, fell into the pit which lay at his feet, but which he had not seen. In this case the pit was called "*Le trou des Vosges.*"

Also, as regards France, we could not hope too much from attentions and amenities : the small change

<sup>1</sup> France does not admit that the sinister Bismarckian conception is true, she does not admit the ethnographical argument, nor does she consider that brute force suffices to create a right binding the souls of men. The Germans will never, never understand that we are attached to Alsace-Lorraine by ties of duty and honour.

<sup>2</sup> There is literally an abyss betwixt France and Germany, and nothing can ever fill it up.

## Imperial Germany

of international intercourse. The resentment against Germany lay too deep in the hearts of the French for us to be able to overcome it by cheap expressions of friendship. France was never so hard hit, not even after the catastrophic defeats of 1812-15, as by the war of 1870-71. In France there is no comprehension of the fact that what seems to them the brutal severity of a conqueror was really a matter of national necessity to us Germans. Perhaps in course of time the French nation will grow reconciled to the decisions of the Peace of Frankfurt, when it realises that they are irrevocable; [especially if we succeed in further improving our strategic position with regard to France, a position which at the present time is still unfavourable.] But so long as France thinks she perceives a possibility of winning back Alsace-Lorraine, either by her own unaided efforts or with the help of others, so long will she consider the existing arrangement provisional and not final. [If in the past the idea of an Anglo-Franco-German or a Russo-Franco-German *entente* was mooted from time to time, it was always inspired by the wish that Germany, in order to make co-operation on the part of France possible, would agree to a settlement of the Alsace-Lorraine "question" which should fall in with the ideas of France and give her satisfaction. This idea arose from a complete misapprehension of German interests and of German character.

Even such Frenchmen as do not envisage their relations to Germany solely from the point of view of revenge,] claim understanding for this feeling with which the majority of the people are deeply imbued. They say it is a proof of a lively sense of honour, if a nation

## A Policy of Splendid Adventures

suffers so keenly from a single injury to its pride that the desire for retribution becomes the ruling passion of the people. It is quite true that for many centuries France was responsible for the spirit of unrest which troubled the history of Europe. We had to fortify our position in the West in an enduring manner, so as to safeguard our peace from fresh disturbances. The remedy has not been altogether unavailing, not only so far as Germany is concerned, but for the whole of Europe. But the French see things in a different light. The policy of splendid adventures, which often has cost Europe its peace, and has repeatedly forced France's neighbours to strain their powers to the utmost, has made the past of France a record of glory, by which the peculiar ambition of the French has found expression in the grandest and most spontaneous fashion. French history differs from the German in this point, among many others: that the greatest and most dramatic moments in which the fate of nations is decided are found in the story of her wars of conquest, whereas the most glorious pages of German history tell of deeds of national defence. We wish to prevent the return of such times as those of Louis XIV. and of Napoleon I., and for our greater security have therefore strengthened our frontiers against France; but it is just such times as these for which many Frenchmen long, and which in moments of excitement are the goal of the desires of the whole nation. Germany, deriving new vigour as she did from the events of 1866 and 1870, has devoted all her strength to the enlargement of her own national life. Every time the national powers of France were fortified she proceeded

## Imperial Germany

to acts of aggression abroad, and would do so again if she foresaw the likelihood of success.

We had to take this into account, and consider that we ourselves should be the opponent against whom France would first turn, if she thought that she could carry out a victorious campaign against Germany. [Anyone who makes a serious study of politics must not yield to the transitory impressions of the moment, but must remember the past and forecast the future. We have shown that we are superior to France from the military and economic standpoint, that as a race we have more vigour and greater powers of organisation. But we must not seek to hide from ourselves the fact that French hostility will be very materially increased by the war. In the winter, 1914-15, a man who is thoroughly conversant with French feelings and conditions wrote: "The feeling in France against us during the Franco-German War, 1870-71, bears the same relation to their feelings to-day as a smoking factory chimney does to an eruption of Vesuvius." The Minister of Education, Albert Sarrant, to quote one of many instances, on the occasion of a prize-giving at the Lycée Condorcet in the summer of 1915, exhorted the young generation in France never to forget and never to forgive the injury that Germany was doing France: "*Si jamais un Français essayera de l'oublier, que sa conscience en révolte lui refuse la paix des jours et le repos des nuits.*"<sup>1</sup> It would be a mistake to imagine that the Radicals do not share this feeling. As soon

<sup>1</sup> If ever a Frenchman should try to forget, may he be so tormented by the pricks of his conscience that he has neither peace by day nor rest by night.

## The French Revenge

as war actually broke out they returned to the chauvinistic traditious of the Jacobins; even M. Gustave Hervé, who had been imprisoned before the war because he said that the dung-heap was the proper place for the French tricolore.] The policy of revenge is supported by the unshakable belief of the French in the indestructibility of the vital power of France. This belief is based on all the experiences of French history. No nation has ever recovered so quickly as the French from the effects of national disasters; none have ever so easily regained their elasticity, their self-confidence and their energy, after grievous disappointments and apparently crushing defeats. More than once France appeared to be finally overcome by her enemies abroad, and so shattered by chaotic conditions at home, that Europe believed she had ceased to be dangerous. But always within a very short time the French nation confronted Europe in all its old strength, or even with added might, and was able again to take up the struggle for European supremacy, to threaten the balance of power once more.

The rise and fall of this nation has always astonished the States of Europe anew. The gradual decline from the proud height to which Louis XIV. had raised France seemed to have led to the disintegration of the French State by the great Revolution, which was quickly followed by civil war, the disbandment of the army, the destruction of the old industrial prosperity, and the bankruptcy of the State. Ten years after the outbreak of the Revolution the armies of the French Republic were masters of Italy, the Netherlands, and all the land west of the Rhine, and had penetrated

## Imperial Germany

victoriously into the heart of Germany; another ten years, and the First Empire was at the height of its glory and Napoleon seemed very near the attainment of his goal—dominion over the whole Continent. Then followed the disasters of Leipzig and Waterloo, the complete defeat of France, and twice in succession the taking of her capital.

During more than twenty years of uninterrupted warfare the French nation had drained to the dregs its industrial and physical resources; and yet under the Second Empire France was able once more to rise to the foremost position. The consequences of the defeat of 1870 dealt France a more grievous blow than any previously. [But this war has proved that it] did not prevent this wonderfully elastic nation from rising yet again. What Alexis de Tocqueville said more than half a century ago about the French people in his classical work, "*L'Ancien Régime et la Révolution*," is in many respects still true to-day :

*"Quand je considère cette nation en elle-même, je la trouve plus extraordinaire qu'aucun des événements de son histoire. En a-t-il jamais paru sur la terre une seule qui fût si remplie de contrastes et si extrême en chacun de ses actes, plus conduite par des sensations moins par des principes; faisant ainsi toujours plus mal ou mieux qu'on ne s'y attendait, tantôt au-dessous du niveau commun de l'humanité, tantôt fort au-dessus; un peuple tellement inaltérable dans ses principaux instincts qu'on le reconnaît encore dans des portraits qui ont été faits de lui il y a deux ou trois mille ans, et en même temps tellement mobile dans ses pensées journalières et dans ses goûts qu'il finit*

## A People of Contrasts

par se devenir un spectacle inattendu à lui-même, et demeure souvent aussi surpris que les étrangers à la vue de ce qu'il vient de faire; le plus casanier et le plus routinier de tous quand on l'abandonne à lui-même, et lorsqu'une fois on l'a arraché malgré lui à son logis et à ses habitudes, prêt à pousser jusqu'au bout du monde et à tout oser; indocile par tempérament, et s'accommodant mieux toutefois de l'empire arbitraire et même violent d'un prince que du gouvernement régulier et libre des principaux citoyens; aujourd'hui l'ennemi déclaré de toute obéissance, demain mettant à servir une sorte de passion que les nations les mieux douées pour la servitude ne peuvent atteindre; conduit par un fil tant que personne ne résiste, ingouvernable dès que l'exemple de la résistance est donné quelque part; trompant toujours ainsi ses maîtres, qui le craignent ou trop ou trop peu; jamais si libre qu'il faille désespérer de l'asservir, ni si asservi qu'il ne puisse encore briser le joug; apte à tout, mais n'excellant que dans la guerre; adorateur du hasard, de la force, du succès, de l'éclat et du bruit, plus que de la vraie gloire; plus capable d'héroïsme que de vertu, de génie que de bon sens, propre à concevoir d'immenses desseins plutôt qu'à parachever de grandes entreprises; la plus brillante et la plus dangereuse des nations de l'Europe, et la mieux faite pour y devenir tour à tour un objet d'admiration, de haine, de pitié, de terreur, mais jamais d'indifférence?"<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "When I contemplate this nation itself, it strikes me as more extraordinary than any of the events in its history. Was there ever in this world a people so full of contrasts, so extreme in each one of its actions, more guided by emotions and less by principles? Thus always doing better or worse than was expected, at one time below

# Imperial Germany

It is a fact that very soon after the re-establishment of her political system, which, as after every military disaster, had been overthrown as a result of the defeats of Wörth and Sedan, France, whose activity in the field of continental politics had been paralysed for the time being, exerted her power with much effect in the sphere of world-politics. In the course of the last twenty-five years she has founded a colonial empire that much more than compensates her for the loss of land and population she suffered in Europe, and has thus raised herself to the position of the second greatest colonial Power in the world. Her possessions in North Africa, which lie at

the common level of humanity, at another far above it; a people so stable in their principal instincts that they are still recognisable in portraits that were drawn two or three thousand years ago, and at the same time so changeable in their daily thoughts and in their tastes, that they themselves are finally astonished at the spectacle they present, and are often as surprised as foreigners at the sight of what they have just done; the most stay-at-home creatures of habit when left to themselves, but once they have been forced, against their will, to abandon their accustomed dwellings and uses, ready to go to the ends of the earth, and to dare anything; intractable by nature, and nevertheless submitting with a better grace to the arbitrary and even brutal rule of a prince, than to the orderly and free government of the principal citizens; one day the avowed enemy of all obedience, the next day serving with such a passionate devotion as even the nations most prone to servitude cannot attain; people who can be guided by a thread as long as no one resists, but who become ungovernable as soon as the example to resist is given anywhere; thus always deceiving their masters who fear them either too little or too much; never so free that it is hopeless to try and subjugate them, nor so utterly enslaved that they cannot throw off the yoke; qualified for anything, but excelling only in war; worshipping chance, force, success, show and clamour, rather than true glory; more capable of heroism than of virtue, of genius than of common sense, better able to conceive immense schemes than to consummate great undertakings; the most brilliant and the most dangerous of the nations of Europe, and the most apt to become in turn an object of admiration, hatred, pity and terror, but never one of indifference."

## French Enterprise

her very gates, have been nearly doubled by the acquisition of Morocco.

This is not the place to discuss whether, as many think, the complete and unlimited control of Morocco in political, industrial and military matters will be a source of weakness, or whether it will not rather lend added strength to France. In any case, the colonial activity of France proves how quickly and vigorously the French spirit of enterprise revived soon after the defeat of 1870, and attempted to win national ascendancy in the path which lay open, and which Germany had designedly left open in Tunis and in Tonquin.

But France will not look upon the greatest colonial empire as a sufficient compensation for the loss of Alsace-Lorraine. And Bismarck had no illusions on this point when he recommended us to promote the success of France's colonial policy in order to distract the attention of the French, at any rate temporarily, from the Vosges.

## CHAPTER VII

### MOROCCO—AND AFTER

WHEN we fell out with France on the Morocco question, it was not our object to thwart her colonial policy, but we had weighty interests of our own as well as our national reputation to defend. Our action in the Moroccan affair had its legal justification in the Treaty of Madrid of 1880, and the German-Moroccan Commercial Treaty of 1890. We were driven to take such action by the high-handed policy of France in Morocco, which threatened to ignore German industrial and commercial interests as well as our national credit.

The Moroccan Treaty, concluded in Madrid in 1880, had defined the European Powers' right to exercise protection over Morocco. It was concluded on the basis of the recognition of the sovereign rights of Morocco. On the strength of this basis Germany concluded a commercial treaty with Morocco in 1890. No change in the arrangements made at Madrid was valid without the assent of the signatory Powers—namely, the Great Powers of Europe with the exception of Russia, the United States, the Scandinavian States, Holland, Belgium and Portugal. France certainly had a special interest in the development of affairs in Morocco, which adjoins one of her own colonial possessions. This fact was always taken into account by Germany. On the basis of the arrangements made at

## A New Situation

Madrid, no objection could have been taken to the special consideration of the particular interests of France and Spain. [But a new situation arose when France, in her efforts to achieve the realisation of more far-reaching plans in Morocco, with intentional want of consideration, utterly disregarded the Treaty of Madrid of 1880 as well as the Commercial Treaty of 1890 between Germany and Morocco. On April 8, 1904, a separate treaty was made between England and France by which a settlement of many long-standing points of difference on colonial matters was reached. In this treaty France declared that she would not demand that England should evacuate Egypt, while England acknowledged France's right as a neighbouring State of Morocco, to maintain order there, and, if need be, to render the Sultan both military and financial assistance in his administrative reforms. There was no occasion to interfere with that part of the treaty which dealt with Egypt. By such intervention we should have still further complicated our relations with England, which at the time were difficult enough; moreover, Prince Bismarck had been of opinion that Germany should certainly not make difficulties for England in Egypt. "In Egypt," the Prince used to say, "we are English; in Serbia, Austrian; in Bulgaria, Russian."

So far as Morocco was concerned, France had definitely promised in the treaty of April 4, 1904, that she would not alter the political status of the country. For this reason, if for no other, it seemed indicated to wait first and see whether France would fulfil this promise, how she would put the treaty into practice, and in particular what attitude she would assume toward our

## **Imperial Germany**

treaty rights in Morocco and the German interests there. Apart from this, it depends on circumstances and is a question of opportunity when an action should be begun there.

There were many grounds for not greeting this Anglo-French treaty with immediate threats, or regarding it with particular nervousness. It seemed best not to confound the Egyptian question with the Moroccan one, and also not, *a priori*, to show ill-will and distrust to France in the Moroccan question. That gave us a better right to object if any infringement of the existing legal conditions or any injury to our economic interests occurred, should it appear that France did not intend to respect them. This was soon to be proved.] France interfered more and more unscrupulously in Moroccan affairs. She hoped by ignoring the Treaty of Madrid, and disregarding the economic interests of other countries, especially those of Germany, quietly to acquire a large new colonial possession of great value. In the pursuit of this policy France relied on England, assuming that the support and countenance of that country was sufficient to enable her to attain her ends.

[The French Government tried to give to the Anglo-French Treaty a sharp point directed against Germany, by arrogantly disposing] of a great and most important field of colonial interests, without even deigning to take the German Empire into consideration. It was clearly an attempt on the part of the Western Powers to claim the sole right of decision in matters of world policy. The French authorities did not hesitate to act immediately upon the Anglo-French arrangement, as if

## Tunification of Morocco

the signatory Powers of the Treaty of Madrid had no existence at all. France set about the "Tunification" of Morocco. The French agent in Morocco, St. Réné-Taillandier, tried to secure a share in the government of the country. By altering the police organisation, by founding a national bank under French direction, and by entrusting public works and contracts to French firms, the industrial life and government in Morocco were to be brought under French influence to such an extent that the ultimate annexation of Morocco as a French possession would have been merely a matter of form.

The Minister for Foreign Affairs at that time—Delcassé, a most gifted and energetic statesman, but too easily swayed by his feelings where Germany was concerned—cherished the hope of confronting us with a *fait accompli* in Morocco. He knew that in so doing he would deal our prestige in the world a severe blow. [He refused to consider any arrangement with Germany; partly because he was filled with an even more ardent desire for revenge than most other Frenchmen who played an active part in politics; partly, too, because he believed that France, owing to the fact that her increase in population was so very much less than that of Germany, would gradually fall into a position of dependence if she attached herself to Germany. We had important and promising economic interests in Morocco which were seriously compromised by this shutting of the open door. There was a fairly widespread belief in Germany that France would meet with difficulties and hindrances in Morocco which would paralyse her military, financial and political striking

## Imperial Germany

power in Europe; but this theory would not hold water. Since such progress has been made in the manufacture of arms, the time has passed when any prolonged resistance to the advance of civilised nations could be made by semi-barbarians, whether they were Berbers, Arabs, Persians or Annamites. It was much more probable that France would in course of time considerably reinforce her "black troops," her army of native Africans, by forming new companies and squadrons from the promising material offered by Morocco.] In addition to this, our dignity and our newly-won position in international politics were at stake. The fact that the signatory Powers of the Treaty of Madrid had been ignored in the Anglo-French Moroccan arrangement was equivalent *in specie* to an affront to the German Empire. France had made a friendly treaty with England, secret negotiations were being carried on with Spain, Russia was not a signatory Power, Italy went her own way in the Mediterranean, the affairs of Morocco were of little interest to the United States, and there was no reason to expect serious opposition from the smaller States of Europe.

Thus only Austria and, above all, Germany were clearly set aside. A weighty choice lay before us. Should we allow ourselves to be left out, and treated as a *quantité négligeable*, in an important international decision? Or should we demand that our interests be considered and our wishes consulted? The first course would have been the easier; we were urged to adopt the second, not only by our sense of honour and our pride, but also by our interests, rightly interpreted. If once we suffered our-

## Emperor William at Tangier

selves to be trampled on with impunity, this first attempt to treat us badly would soon have been followed by a second and a third.

On July 3, 1900, the Emperor William II. had given utterance to the words : "I am not of opinion that our German people, under the leadership of their princes, conquered and suffered thirty years ago in order to be set aside in important decisions on foreign affairs. If this should happen, the German nation's position as a World Power would be destroyed for good and all, and I do not intend this to come to pass." French Moroccan policy was an obvious attempt to set Germany aside in an important decision on foreign affairs, an attempt to adjust the balance of power in Europe in favour of France. A precedent would have been established which must of necessity have tempted to repetition. We could not risk that. From this point of view the Moroccan affair became a national question for us. The course of our policy in Morocco was clearly indicated.

On March 31, 1905, His Majesty the Emperor, in pursuance of my advice, landed at Tangier, where he defended the independence and sovereignty of Morocco in unequivocal language. The demands of Germany to be consulted about Moroccan affairs were thus announced to the world. It was made clear that Germany intended to adhere to the international treaty of 1880, based on the acknowledgment of the sovereignty of Morocco, and that she was not inclined to recognise the new situation created without her consent by the Anglo-French Moroccan Treaty and the action of France in that country.

## Imperial Germany

Our object in this was to substitute an international settlement by the signatory Powers of the Treaty of Madrid for the one-sided arrangement between England and France. We also had to prevent an international conference from simply giving its consent to French policy in Morocco. Both ends were attained by the fact that the Conference of Algeciras actually took place, and by the decisions it made. France violently opposed the scheme of calling a conference. For a time it seemed as if M. Delcassé would make the question of peace or war depend on this point. When the German Government refused to yield, France consented to the conference. M. Delcassé resigned the portfolio of Foreign Affairs. He retired, and we got our way. [The retirement of M. Delcassé proved to be no transitory triumph for us. His fall weakened French chauvinism, and more prudent and peaceful counsels prevailed again in France, thereby facilitating our policy as well as the building of our fleet. M. Delcassé was the instrument by which our enemies hoped to strike us. As Carl Peters rightly said, those circles in England which did not wish us to carry out our naval programme thought by Delcassé's help to inveigle France into an offensive alliance with England, so that they could attack us with the British fleet. It was of the utmost importance that they should be deprived of this weapon at that particular moment, when we had completed about half of our naval programme.]

In Algeciras our position was naturally a difficult one, seeing that we were opposed to the *entente* Powers, and that the other Powers took little interest in the Moroccan question. Nevertheless, while preserv-

## The Open Door in Morocco

ing the sovereignty of the Sultan, we succeeded in securing international control of the police organisation and the Moroccan National Bank, thus ensuring the open door in Morocco for German economic interests as well as for those of all other countries. We did not attain all we wished, but at least all that was essential. We had foiled the attempt to set us aside in the settlement of an affair of great international importance. [Not only had we successfully defended commercial liberty in Morocco, but we had proved that we could not be pushed aside, even by a coalition of other Powers.] We should have a voice in the further development of Moroccan affairs, and we did not need to renounce our right to this without adequate compensation. The decisions of the Algeciras Conference bolted the door against the attempts of France to compass the "Tunification" of Morocco. They also provided a bell we could ring at any time should France show any similar tendencies again. Very soon after the Algeciras Conference the new state of affairs made itself felt in a painful manner in France. The "nefarious Algeciras document" was characterised as "European tutelage forced upon France," or at best as an "honourable retreat." [The *Revue des Deux Mondes* declared that by the Algeciras document far more duties were imposed on France than rights were conceded to her. "*On a vu nulle part une souveraineté aussi garrottée par des liens multiples et assujettie à de si nombreuses et si minutieuses servitudes. . . . Les puissances ou plutôt la principale entre elles, l'Allemagne, ont consenti à ce que nous établissions notre protectorat au Maroc, à la condition de n'y jouir daucun avantage économique. On a donné*

## Imperial Germany

*une extension tout-à-fait inusitée à la formule bien connue de la porte ouverte. . . . La France, c'est triste à dire, n'a obtenu aucune prime de gestion au Maroc.”<sup>1]</sup>*

It has been said that after Delcassé resigned we ought to have tried to come to a direct understanding with France. It is a question whether France was at all inclined to pay us an acceptable price. Any way, it was not open to us to pursue this course, if only on account of our position with regard to Turkey and Islam. In November, 1898, the Emperor William II. had said in Damascus: “The three hundred million Mohammedans who live scattered over the globe may be assured of this, that the German Emperor will be their friend at all times.” In Tangier the Emperor had declared emphatically in favour of the integrity of Morocco. We should have completely destroyed our credit in the Mohammedan world, if so soon after these declarations we had sold Morocco to the French. Our Ambassador in Constantinople, Freiherr von Marschall, [who had rendered us extraordinarily good services by improving our relations with the Sublime Porte and with Islam,] said to me at the time : “If we sacrifice Morocco in spite of Damascus and Tangier, we shall at one swoop lose our position in Turkey, and with it all the advantages and prospects that we have painfully acquired by the labour of many years.”

<sup>1</sup> Nowhere has sovereignty been hampered by such multifarious restrictions or subjected to such numerous and detailed humiliations. . . . The powers, or rather the principal power among them, to wit Germany, have consented to let us establish a protectorate in Morocco on condition that no economic advantage shall accrue to us thereby. An altogether unheard-of latitude was given to the interpretation of the well-known formula of the open door. . . . Sad to say, France has secured no premium for her work of administration in Morocco.

## The 1911 Arrangement

The separate Franco-German Treaty of February 9, 1909, which was concluded with the distinguished assistance of von Kiderlen-Wächter, later Secretary of State, diminished the likelihood of continual friction between the two countries. It secured France a certain amount of political influence without making annexation possible; but it retained the principle of the open door, and it afforded German and French commerce and industry equal rights in the State of Morocco, which preserved its independence without loss of territory. The arrangement promoted peace in that it supplemented the Algeciras settlement in such points as had proved in practice to require correction. [The co-operation of German and French merchants was to be brought about by means of German participation in economic and financial matters, whereby both parties would profit. The arrangement of 1909 was a purely business arrangement, and might have put an end to the Moroccan difference, supposing always that France was sensible and moderate in the exercise of the political influence which had been conceded to her in Morocco.] The decisions of the Algeciras Conference were explicitly confirmed by the treaty of 1909. The German right to a voice in decisions touching the fate of Morocco, this right which stood in the way of the annexation of the country by France, was in no way affected by the separate treaty. What we received in 1911 in return for renouncing this right—whether it be much or little, whether the piece of land in the Congo that fell to our share be of great value or small—was certainly obtained on the basis of the Algeciras decisions, and thanks to our action in the year

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1905. [Even during the present war a French pamphlet speaks of the “*portion de notre Congo Français que l'Allemagne nous a extorquée en échange de l'hypothèque morale qu'elle avait mise insolemment sur le Maroc.*”<sup>1</sup>] We never had any intention of taking possession of any part of Morocco; not because we were afraid of France, but for our own sake. England and Spain, besides France, would have opposed us there. On the other hand, we could not hope to reconcile France by exaggeratedly friendly advances in the Moroccan question. [Rather, the Congo-Moroccan treaty, which connoted a renunciation on our part of the rights acquired at Algeciras and assured by the treaty of 1909, proved to be the starting-point of that “*esprit nouveau*” which arose in 1911 and considerably increased French chauvinism and consequently their desire to take action.

The Italian Tripoli expedition, too, really had its foundation in the Congo-Moroccan treaty. When it became known in Rome that the incorporation of Morocco in France's colonial possessions was sure to occur, the Marquis San Giuliano, at that time Minister for Foreign Affairs, said to his secretaries, drawing out his watch as he spoke, “Note this hour and this date. To-day has decided that we go to Tripoli. We cannot do otherwise, unless we care to miss the last possible opportunity of taking possession of Tripoli.” The Tripoli expedition in turn was the cause of the first Balkan War which dealt the Turkish Empire a severe blow, and, moreover, had the most far-reaching consequences in European

<sup>1</sup> A portion of our French Congo which the Germans extorted from us in exchange for the sort of moral mortgage she had insolently put upon Morocco.

## Ultimate Aim of French Policy

politics. The Marquis San Giuliano and Signor Giolitti, who at that time directed Italian policy, did not intend the Tripoli expedition to have this effect, but, as so often in politics, their action had far more widespread results than they had originally desired.] However high may be the economic value of Morocco to France, however great the increase of power which she expects from this addition to her North African possessions, her Moroccan policy was—especially at critical moments—rather a means to an end than an end in itself. In certain French circles the original object was to ignore Germany, and thus, with the help of England, to make an effective attack on our position and credit in the world; later on they thought they saw a chance, with the support of England, to come to a final settlement with Germany under most favourable conditions. These tendencies of French policy twice brought the Moroccan question into the van of international politics and endangered the peace of the world.

[At a time when no one in Germany dreamt of the outbreak of a world war, I aroused a certain amount of dissent in the country by writing in my discussion of "Deutsche Politik unter Kaiser Wilhelm II." (German Policy under the Emperor William II.):] "When we consider our relations with France, we must not forget that she is unreconciled. So far as man can tell, the ultimate aim of French policy for many years to come will be to create the necessary conditions, which to-day are still wanting, for a settlement with Germany with good prospects of success. If we soberly realise this truth, we shall be able to adopt a proper attitude towards France. Indignant tirades against the incorrigi-

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bility of the French are in very bad taste, as are futile attempts to propitiate them. The German 'Michel' has no need again and again to approach the coy beauty with flowers in his hand, and at times with a rather awkward bow; her gaze is riveted on the Vosges. Only a slow recognition of the irrevocability of the loss of 1871 can accustom France finally and without restriction to the state of affairs fixed in the Peace of Frankfurt. It is not impossible that the effect of convulsively straining her military resources to the uttermost may, by reacting on the economic and social conditions of France, hasten the return of pacific feelings, and that once again the French proverb may prove true, '*Que l'excès du mal amène la guérison.*'<sup>1</sup> The reintroduction of military service for a period of three years betokens such a rise in the 'armament fever,' that it may lead to the return of a normal temperature. Should the three-year military service entail an income tax, this would also probably have a sobering effect.

"Till such time France will be against us. Although she is at great pains to remedy the military disadvantage at which she stands in comparison with our State, and which is due to her smaller population, she no longer has the old-time confidence in her own strength alone. It is the aim of French policy, by means of alliances and friendships, to restore the balance between France and her German neighbour, or even, if possible, to turn the scales in her own favour. To this end France has had to renounce a part of her own free initiative, and has become more dependent than formerly on foreign Powers. The French, of course,

<sup>1</sup> The very excess of the evil brings about a cure.

## French Attitude in the Boer War

are very well aware of this. The fact that the hypersensitive national pride of the French acquiesces in this state shows what is the predominant desire of the people.

"When, shortly after the Krüger telegram, enthusiasm for the Boers ran high in France, as in all Europe, an English Minister anxiously asked a French diplomat whether France might not be tempted to side with Germany. The Frenchman's answer ran as follows : ' You may rest assured that as long as Alsace-Lorraine remains German, whatever else may happen, the French nation will consider Germany its permanent enemy, and will regard any other Power merely as an accidental opponent. It is hardly possible to imagine any international situation which could induce France to change fundamentally the policy inspired by the memory of 1870.'"

[I think that the events of the last years have confirmed my diagnosis.] The course and the result of the quarrel about Fashoda showed how little success or failure in the wider world count in the estimation of France, when compared with her loss of position in Europe. France suffered an undeniable defeat in this quarrel with England, and this was keenly felt. Fashoda stood for the end of an old and proud dream of French colonial policy, and made the French nation feel the superiority of British power in a pitiless fashion.

For a moment public opinion in France was enraged and turned impetuously against England. The bulk of those people who in politics cannot distinguish between the transitory and the permanent, and mistake the noisy din of actuality for the echo of what is

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really significant, thought that a change had come over French policy. The ill-feeling against England was to drive France to the side of Germany, the disappointment about their ill-success in the Sudan was to paralyse resentment at the loss of Alsace-Lorraine, and new hope of requital for Fashoda was to take the place of the old hope of revenge for Metz and Sedan. It was impossible to misunderstand the nature of French policy more thoroughly than by imagining such a state of affairs. A nation that for a whole generation has cherished one hope and one ideal will not turn aside from its old course because of a misadventure on a remote track. The hatred of Germany could not be affected, let alone removed, by ill-feeling against England. Even if the momentary anger against England had been far more passionate and heartfelt than it actually was, it would, nevertheless, not have been the beginning of permanently hostile feelings, for the attitude of France to England had been definitely established in French policy before the trouble in the Sudan. France soon discovered in English jealousy of Germany her natural ally against the victor of 1870, and pressed to England's side. There was disappointment in Paris because England would not, for the sake of French friendship, sacrifice any of her interests in the Sudan and on the Nile, but France was ready in any case, though with clenched teeth, to pay this price, or even a higher one, for England's friendship. The defeat in the Fashoda affair was set down in the debit account of the French policy of revenge, and finally resulted in renewed hatred of Germany rather than in hostility towards England. Forty-eight hours after

## The Anglo-French Entente

France had yielded in the Fashoda affair, a French ambassador, one of the best political intellects in France, was asked by an Italian colleague what effect this event would have on French relations with England. The Frenchman replied : "An excellent one ! Once the difference about the Sudan is settled nothing stands in the way of a complete *entente* with England."

This *entente* really became an accomplished fact not long after the Fashoda incident, and has persisted through all the changes of international politics. Owing to her alliance with France, and the complications in the East, Russia has often supported the Anglo-French *entente*, so that we are justified in speaking of a Triple *entente* as a counterpart to the Triple Alliance. [However, it was not till the outbreak of war that the Triple *entente* became a solid coalition. As late as April 24, 1914, Baron Beyens, the Belgian Minister in Berlin, stated in connection with the rumour that the Russian Ambassador in Paris, M. Iswolski, was to be transferred to London, that M. Iswolski would be able to convince himself there that public opinion in England had not the slightest desire to see England lose her freedom of action by a formal treaty which would bind her fate to that of Russia and France. It was the London Protocol of September 5, 1914, that changed the hitherto more or less loose connection between the three Powers into a close alliance. But that does not mean that the conflicting interests among our opponents have for ever been done away with. The solidarity which the war has created between England and Russia, France and England, Russia and Japan, this union which for the time being has been cemented by blood shed in a common

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cause, is contrary to the nature of things. In addition, there are also points of difference between America and Japan, Japan and the Australian Commonwealth, which this war alone has pushed into the background.]

The political leadership of this triple union even before the war was, at decisive moments, mostly in the hands of England. English leadership has sometimes had a soothing and sobering effect on France, and has done good work for the preservation of peace in Europe. [But the outbreak and the course of the world war have shown how ready the leading circles in England were to throw their decisive influence on the policy of the *entente*, and to direct that influence steadfastly and deliberately against their German rival as soon as they thought that peace could no longer be preserved. The consideration that, if the troublesome German competitor would only disappear from the face of the earth, or at least from world politics, England, according to the dictum of Montaigne, "*que le dommage de l'un est le profit de l'autre*,"<sup>1</sup> could only profit, was a political dogma held by the majority of leading British politicians.]

[But between the sentiments in England and the fundamental feeling in France towards us, there was a marked difference. Ever since the Frankfurt Treaty of Peace had been signed, France had been ready to attack us at any time when she thought she had sufficient forces and could count on a simultaneous Russian attack upon Germany. England was willing to do so only if she were convinced that her intervention in a war would weaken Germany politically and economically. The

<sup>1</sup> That one man's loss is another man's gain.

## Clashing Interests

mainspring of French policy toward us was a kind of mistaken national idealism; that of English policy, crude national egotism. He who coolly follows his interests will at the decisive moment master him who, side by side with him, pursues an idea. But time will show whether the English policy of interest was not wrong, because the past has never produced such a conflict of interests between England and Germany as to justify a struggle for existence.]

Doubtless the English merchant has at times been irked by the competition abroad of his German colleague; doubtless German and English economic interests do clash here and there in the world. But in the course of her great world policy England has hardly found any Great Power bar her way less often than the German Empire. This fact did not escape the English, in spite of their anxiety about the German navy. Up to 1914 Germany and England were the only two great European Powers who had never shed a drop of each other's blood. There had been friction and tension between them, but never war. In England, too, there were people who realised that England, by continually opposing Germany and by overdoing the anti-German policy, only injured herself, and who understood what excellent customers Germany and England are of each other, and how grievously British industrial life would feel the loss of German custom. If, on the one hand, there were many opposing interests in Germany and England, on the other they had very vital interests in common. And, in truth, the danger to English supremacy at sea presented by the new world and sea power belonged only to the sphere of possibilities—

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or rather of imagination—and not to the realm of tangible realities.

The attitude of England to Germany was really not comparable with that of France to us. Although, since we first trod the path of international politics, we had often found England opposed to us, yet, after we had attained the necessary power of defence at sea, our relations with England could have been genuine and friendly. [By the very building of our fleet we had removed the chief hindrance to co-operation between us and England upon a foundation of absolute parity and sound reciprocity. We had cleared the way for an understanding in every field of world politics, which should take the interests of both countries into consideration. The English ministers refused to recognise this, and did not want either the understanding or sensible co-operation. They must therefore not be surprised if, in consideration of our unfavourable coastal circumstances, we demand serious and solid guarantees to ensure our safety and our independence with regard to England.

The *volte-face* of public opinion from a desire for peace to zeal for war has taken place slowly in England, as has been the case in former wars. England is wont to throw her whole weight into the scale gradually, not immediately nor all at once. The experience of history should have warned us to take this peculiarity of the English nation into account. In December, 1915, a neutral, who had visited England, stated in the *Berliner Tageblatt* that at the beginning of the war many Englishmen had been of the opinion that England would have done better to remain neutral;

## What Mr. Asquith Said

that after the outbreak of war and in the course of the same these views had entirely disappeared. That this was correct was shown by the speech which Lord Rosebery, a most distinguished English statesman, made in Edinburgh at the beginning of January, 1916; he accused us of having started the world war "by a deliberate and infamous conspiracy against the liberties of the world"; furthermore, he, a former Prime Minister, forgot himself so far as to characterise our friendliness to England, German visits to England, all our attempts to achieve friendly relations with England, as "Judas kisses." A few weeks later the present English Prime Minister, Mr. Asquith, answered a conciliatory speech of the German Imperial Chancellor's in such acrimonious and insulting language as has hitherto never been used, even in war time, to a leading personality in a country which but a short time before had been friendly.]

Rightly recognising that peace and friendship between Germany and England would be beneficial to both countries, the Emperor William II., since his accession to power, has worked spontaneously and with never-failing zeal to restore friendly relations between the two great Germanic nations. There were many fields in which both have parallel interests. In proportion as the conviction spread here and in England, that the national interests of both countries profited most by concerted action, the preliminary conditions for steadfast and honest trust and friendship could have gained ground.

The fact that the danger of an armed conflict between England and Germany more than once

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seemed very imminent, by no means indicated that the struggle was only postponed and not terminated. It has often happened that diplomacy has seemed obliged to leave further explanations to armed force. But the very imminence of this critical moment has frequently sufficed to give a fresh impetus to negotiations which had come to a standstill, and to bring about a peaceful solution. War clouds are inevitable in the political sky. But the number of those that burst is far smaller than the number of those that disappear. Heavy clouds threatened the peace between England and France in the 'forties of the last century, at the time of the July monarchy, and also during the Second Empire. [In his speech on February 6, 1888, Prince Bismarck showed that, with the exception of the comparatively short period when Europe, exhausted by the Napoleonic wars, enjoyed a somewhat deceptive tranquillity under the protection of the Holy Alliance, the danger of great conflagrations was always present.] All these threatening clouds melted away without bursting. [And when I review my personal experiences, I remember that four years after the Peace of Frankfurt, when the "War-in-sight" article appeared in the *Post*, Prince Bismarck was criticised in many quarters, because he would not realise that war with France was inevitable. After the Berlin Congress, and even more during the critical winter of 1887-88, Prince Bismarck was blamed because, in spite of the spread of the Pan-Slav movement in Russia, and in spite of extensive military preparations in that country, he endeavoured to preserve peace with Russia. Prince Bismarck remained unperturbed. Three times he made war, but much oftener he avoided wars which

## Splashing in Hypothetical Politics

he did not desire. The naïf conception, that war was an unavoidable natural phenomenon, like an earthquake or a deluge of rain, was utterly foreign to his ideas. In spite of the imminence of conflicts in 1875, 1878, and 1887-88, he preserved the peace. And, as a matter of fact, since those critical days we have lived at peace with France for thirty-nine years, with Russia for thirty-six and twenty-six years respectively.

More than once in recent years I have heard it said that it would have been better if war had broken out over the Moroccan question in 1905, or over the annexation of Bosnia in 1909. It is easy to get beyond one's depth if one splashes about in the blue waves of the boundless ocean of hypothetical politics, as I once called them in the Reichstag. It is just as impossible to say now what would have happened if war had resulted from one or the other of the critical phases of the past, as it is impossible to tell for certain whether, if the general conflagration had not occurred in July, 1914, we should nevertheless have had a world war later, or whether events might not have supervened which would have indefinitely postponed the danger of a general conflict. Only a few weeks before the outbreak of war Baron Beyens, the Belgian Minister in Berlin, wrote to his government: "In a few years equilibrium of forces between Germany and France will no longer be possible. Germany need only have patience, need only continue to develop her economic and financial power in peace, need only await the results of her excess of births, and without opposition and without a struggle she will be the ruling Power in all Central Europe." This consideration alone shows

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how unfounded is the accusation of our enemies, that Germany wanted the war.]

Our relations with England required particularly firm and steady handling. We desired amicable and even friendly relations with England, but we were not afraid of hostile ones. Official Germany and the nation itself had to model their behaviour accordingly. A policy of running after England would have been as pointless as a policy of offensiveness. For a long time our foreign policy was, to a certain extent, regulated by the question of armaments; it had to be carried on under abnormal conditions. After our fleet had been built the normal state of affairs was restored; our armaments were at the service of our policy. The friendship as well as the enmity of the German Empire, supported by a strong navy, were naturally matters of very much greater importance to England than the friendship or enmity of Germany when she was unarmed at sea. [England would not have our friendship, and repeatedly refused to grasp the hand we offered her. She thought she would gain more from enmity to Germany. The history of England, who has always dealt most harshly with her vanquished foe in the few European wars in which she has taken part in modern times, gives us Germans an idea of the fate in store for us had we been defeated. Once embarked upon a war, England has always ruthlessly devoted all means at her disposal to its prosecution. English policy was always guided by what Gambetta called "*la souveraineté du but.*" England can only be got at by employing like decision and determination. The English character being what it is, since in the course of the world's history we are

## Ruthlessness becomes Imperative

now for the first time at war with England, our future depends upon our employing all our means and all our forces with equal ruthlessness, so as to secure the victory and obtain a clear road. Since the German people, with unparalleled heroism, but also at the cost of fearful sacrifices, has waged war against half the world, it is our right and our duty to obtain safety and independence for ourselves at sea, and also really sufficient and, above all, practical, guarantees for the freedom of the seas and for the further fulfilment of our economic and political tasks throughout the world. The result of the great struggle in this particular respect will be decisive for the total result of the war and also for the judgment that will be passed upon it.]

## CHAPTER VIII

### ACHIEVEMENTS OF GERMAN WORLD POLICY

GERMAN policy, even before it had procured a strong navy, had been able to secure points of support which promised well for our world interests in the future. We developed and improved our old colonial possessions. [German colonial trade in 1912 amounted to seven and a half times that in 1900.] The serious rising of the Hereros in South-West Africa was put down, thanks to the endurance and courage of our troops, though it was at great expense and at the cost of grievous sacrifices. The names of the brave men who fought and died in the African desert—I will only mention Count Wolff-Werner von Arnim and Freiherr Burkhard von Erffa, who both went out as volunteers, and met death heroically there—deserve to live in our history. [Their heroic bearing was an important indication that our nation had not lost its military virtues during a long period of peace. May their blood not have been shed in vain ! And South-West Africa with its diamond mines, the oldest German colony, that great territory where, led by Prince Bismarck, Germany for the first time set foot upon African soil, may it return to our possession after the war !

The South-West African rising marked a crisis in our colonial policy, but also a change for the better. By reorganising the Colonial Administration, by trans-

## The Landing in Kiao-chau

forming the Colonial Department of the Foreign Ministry into an independent Imperial Ministry, and above all by arousing a lively comprehension of our tasks and aims in the colonies, we succeeded, at last, during the tenure of office of the Secretary of State, Herr Dernburg, in getting our colonial policy off the dead centre. It was just the same as with the navy. With great trouble, and after a long fight, we were at last lucky enough to convince all civil parties of the commonality of the usefulness and necessity of a positive colonial policy, and to gain their support for it. About the time when we began to build our fleet, [our landing in Kiao-chau took place, in the autumn of 1897, when I first held office as Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. "It is from the year of Kiao-chau that the growth of the formidable German navy dates," wrote *The Times* in the course of the present war; this paper has from the first followed the development of our sea power with eyes sharpened by envy. It was quite true that the fact that we established ourselves on the coast of China was directly and intimately connected with our naval programme, and was our first practical step along the path of world politics. A few weeks after this] we concluded the Shantung Treaty with China, which was one of the most significant actions in modern German history, and which secured for us a "place in the sun" in the Far East, on the shores of the Pacific Ocean, which have a great future before them.

Up to the end of the nineteenth century Europe had been able to work only on the outskirts of China. Since then the interior has been opened up more and more. [After, by seizing Tsingtau, one of the most

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promising harbours on the Chinese coast, we had provided ourselves with a firm basis which could not be improved upon, for our interests and plans, and by means of Shantung had secured an equally desirable door of entry, our policy in Eastern Asia aimed at obtaining recognition of equal rights for all nations in China. After the fall of Tsingtau, a German traveller, who had recently been in Asia, wrote in the Vienna *Neue Freie Presse*: "For Germany, struggling to gain a position in the world, Tsingtau was the most important of all her Eastern colonies; it was of great military consequence, the point of support of her commerce and her reputation in Asia, a material and moral result of her grand development. Thanks to the orderly enterprise of the Germans, from a hopeless desert there sprang one of the most beautiful foreign settlements; there arose a port which for practical excellence can compare with any harbour in Eastern Asia. With the loss of Tsingtau the hope of a brilliant future has been destroyed."

Let us hope that through this war we have not lost for ever that great position in the Far East which we won by our action in China in 1897-98, which we effectually defended during the Boxer Rising, and which since then we have developed by patient, perspicacious and diligent work. After the conquest of Tsingtau by the Japanese, *The Times* opined that Kiao-chau grew more and more dangerous, as it waxed great in riches, commerce and power. The circumstances in which Germany had established herself there were a sad memory for England. The *entente* Powers and all neutrals who trade with China could now joyfully share

## The Chinese Question

in the rising commerce which had developed in the German port, and which was much more considerable than that of any other German possession. China would be glad to get back her old port "in a greatly improved condition."

Thus *The Times* wrote scoffingly. But it is our duty to continue with firm determination to make the most of our interests in Eastern Asia on broad lines.] There is much to be gained by introducing industries into a huge Empire, with a population of four hundred million. [A fifth part of all mankind lives in China. It is one of the richest lands in the world, on account of its mineral wealth, iron and more especially coal, and of its waterways; it holds out extraordinary prospects for imports; it is the largest market in the world that has not yet been exploited.] We must not fall to the rear in this boundless field of action, [where before the war the German merchant achieved such fine successes by his bold enterprise and unwearied diligence.]

The end of the Spanish-American War of 1899 gave us the opportunity to acquire the Caroline and Marianne Islands, and thus win a point of support in Polynesia. A year later we succeeded in bringing to an end the long quarrel over Samoa by a settlement with England and America that was to our advantage. [Both acquisitions, that of Samoa as well as that of the Caroline and Marianne groups, had been the subject of diplomatic efforts lasting for many years and going back to the very beginning of our Colonial policy. For that reason, if for no other, it is to be hoped that we have not finally lost those beautiful islands with which we associate many memories. Our friendly relations with the Spanish

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nation found expression in the understanding regarding the Caroline Islands; we have cultivated these relations to some purpose, for when we became involved in this war, we met with more sincere sympathy in Spain than in any other country that has taken no part in the war.]

In 1898 we concluded a treaty with England, [respecting the exploitation of Portuguese colonies in Africa,] which was significant, not only because at a somewhat difficult stage our relations with England were made easier, without endangering our position with regard to other Powers, but also because we secured thereby valuable prospects for the future. This treaty held out hopes that results would be the more profitable the more patiently we waited till the time should arrive to realise them; it was brought about largely by the efforts of our ambassador in London, Count Paul Hatzfeldt, whom Bismarck used to call the best horse in his diplomatic stables.

The Bagdad railway scheme was a result of the Emperor's journey to Palestine in 1898, a very few months after the first Navy Bill was passed, and this was in every respect successful. It threw open to German influence and German enterprise a field of activity between the Mediterranean Sea and the Persian Gulf, on the rivers Euphrates and Tigris, and along their banks, which can hardly be surpassed for fertility and for its great possibilities of development in the future. [The Bagdad railway has already proved to be of military value, for it enabled Turkey to send reinforcements to Mesopotamia in time to stop the English on their march to Bagdad, and to inflict sensible defeats upon them. After eighteen months the English have not yet suc-

# The Future in Mesopotamia

ceeded in entering Bagdad. "Ce ne sont pas seulement les forces turques opérant en Mesopotamie qui se ravitaillent par cette voie," was the plaint of the *Temps* after the first English reverse at Kut-el-Amara, "mais toute action turco-allemande en Perse repose sur cette communication, qui relie Constantinople à Ispahan."<sup>1</sup> The Bagdad railway also restores the route by which trade from Europe to India and from India to Europe once passed. [By means of a rational irrigation of the districts through which it passes, this territory can once more be made the paradise it was in ancient times.] If one can speak of boundless prospects anywhere, it is in Mesopotamia, [not only on account of the Mesopotamian oilfields which for the most part lie near the Bagdad railway, but in every respect.

The development of the resources of Mesopotamia is one of the great tasks of our future. I have worked long for the establishment of close political and commercial relations between us and Turkey, and I carried on the Bagdad railway enterprise with full consciousness of the immense prospects it opened out. But everyone, even those who, as I do, estimate our future possibilities in the East very highly, must realise that the Near South-East cannot replace all other markets for us. Before the war Turkey only took 1 per cent., Bulgaria 0.3 per cent., Greece 0.2 per cent., and Austria-Hungary a little more than 10 per cent. of our exports, while 14.2 per cent. of German exports went direct to England, and of

<sup>1</sup> Not only the Turkish forces operating in Mesopotamia are revictualled by this route, but the whole Turco-German action in Persia rests upon this line of communication which unites Constantinople with Ispahan.

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the 12.4 per cent. which went to Belgium and Holland, probably another 6 per cent. was destined for England. Before the war we were the country from which the Russians imported far and away the most; our exports to Russia were three times as great as the English and eight times as great as the French. Our export to Italy before the war exceeded that of England by about 50,000,000 lire and that of France by more than 337,000,000 lire. Our export trade to France before the war was second only to that of England, and only to an inconsiderable extent, while it far surpassed that of any other country. We must cherish or possess no illusions on a subject like this, but must stick to realities.

As in the case of the understanding with England in 1898 respecting the exploitation of the Portuguese colonies in Africa, so, before the outbreak of the present war, we carried on negotiations with England respecting the recognition of our interests and rights in the Bagdad railway which, it is to be hoped, will by the result of this war be secured to us in its whole extent from sea to sea.]

The German Empire to-day has become a great World Power, not only by virtue of its industrial and commercial interests, but become a great World Power in the sense that its arm can reach to the farthest corners of the world. We built our navy as a means of national defence and to strengthen the measure of our national safety, and we never used it for any other purpose.

The problem of modern German international politics, to secure a foundation for our position as a Great

## Accepted as a World Power

Power, on the whole could be considered to be solved [one hundred years after the revolt of 1813, a quarter of a century after the accession to the throne of the Emperor William II.]. No doubt the German Empire was unwillingly accepted as a World Power by those States which for centuries had been used to settling questions of oversea politics alone. But our right to a voice in world matters was now recognised in every country where the German flag was seen. We had to reach this goal. It was of the same significance as the creation of our navy, and could only be attained by overcoming considerable difficulties both in the sphere of foreign, or international, and of home, or national, politics.

During the first decade after the introduction of the Navy Bill of 1897, we had to pass through a zone of extreme danger in our foreign policy, for we were to provide ourselves with adequate sea power to protect our interests effectually, without at the time having sufficient strength at sea to defend ourselves. Germany emerged from this critical period, unharmed and without loss of dignity or prestige. In the autumn of 1897 [a few weeks after I had assumed my duties in the Foreign Office], the *Saturday Review* published that famous article, which culminated in the statement that, if Germany were swept off the face of the earth to-morrow, there would be no Englishman the day after but would be the richer for it, and ended with the words: "*Germaniam esse delendam.*"

Twelve years later two important English newspapers, neither of them particularly pro-German, declared that the position of Germany was greater and

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stronger than at any time since the retirement of Prince Bismarck. From 1897 to 1909 a significant development had taken place that was not always realised by contemporaries, but that posterity will recognise and appreciate. During those years, by building our fleet, we successfully accomplished the transition to world politics. Our ascent into the regions of world politics was successful. We did not allow ourselves to be thrust forward by any Power against another, nor did we permit anyone to use us as a cat's-paw, [remembering the truth of the old saying that the independence of a State is a measure of its standing in the world, and that a great nation must seek its salvation not from others, but by itself.] By our calm bearing during the Boer War we took the first keen edge off the excitement which reigned in England after the Krüger telegram; and in the further course of events we gave England no cause to thwart us in the building of our fleet. On the other hand, while we carefully cultivated the Triple Alliance, we never came into actual conflict with the Dual Alliance, which would have hindered us in the gradual acquirement of a navy. What with the Anglo-French *entente* and the Dual Alliance, we had to follow a narrow path which grew even narrower when the former expanded into a Triple *entente*, and would have been impassable without extreme caution, when England by means of a network of alliances and *ententes* sought to isolate us. When at last, during the Bosnian crisis, the sky of international politics cleared, when German power on the Continent burst its encompassing bonds, we had already got beyond the stage of preparation in the construction of our fleet.

## Traits of National Character

Besides the difficulties of foreign politics there were the difficulties of home politics, though the latter were easier to overcome. We Germans have not the gift of meeting the demands of a new era cheerfully and spontaneously. Goethe pointed to the heart of our strength but also of our weakness, when he said that it was characteristic of the Germans that they take everything heavily. The proverbial struggle between the old time and the new has suffered less interruption in the course of our history than in that of any other nation, and in every phase of any importance in our development it occurs again and again with undiminished strength. But, though amongst us innovations may have to encounter more vigorous opposition than elsewhere, yet in the end our development has never been impeded to such an extent as to cause lasting harm. We can even say that the uninterrupted continuance of antagonistic criticism has saved us Germans from dangerous innovations, and has brought us the steady ascent and sure progress in which we may rejoice to-day. That is what Bismarck meant when he said that rulers in Germany required the barbed wire of criticism, which kept them to the right path, because they ran the risk of tearing their hands to pieces if they engaged in movements that were too eccentric. Of course, Bismarck did not imply by this that criticism is always, or even mostly, in the right. But this spirit of negation forces men to show gravity, the strength of conviction, and the power of persuasion, and to be really clear in their minds as to the necessity of treading new paths. Wherever in Germany it has been possible to convince the majority of

## Imperial Germany

the people, including those who were at first antagonistic, of the necessity of a thing, we have found that this new conviction, though slowly acquired, has taken firm root. [Anxious avoidance and prolonged suppression of criticism have on the other hand always and everywhere done harm.]

The idea of the necessity of having a navy has now become the common property of all Germans. From the most pronounced Agrarians among the Conservatives to the extreme wing of the Democracy, there is no radical opposition to our German naval policy. The Ultra-Liberals, as is well known, had partly refused their support to the great, fundamental Navy Bills. They really and truly represented the antagonism of the old era to the new. It was in the year 1900 that, after a long and excited session of the Budget Committee, the leader of the people's party, Eugen Richter, came to me privately and remarked: "You will succeed, you will get a majority for your supplementary estimates for the Navy. I would never have believed it." In the interview that followed I was at pains to explain to this man, in many ways so distinguished, why his opposition to the Navy Bill was inexplicable to me, for the German democracy had for decades demanded German efficiency at sea; Herwegh had sung the cradle song of the German fleet, and the first German warships had been built in 1848. I pointed out all the reasons why we must protect our commerce and our industries on the ocean. Richter listened attentively and said at last: "You may be right. But I am too old, I cannot take part in this new turn of affairs." The change proph-

## Bismarck and Herr Ballin

sied by Eugen Richter was soon to be accomplished. The opposition of the people's party was based less on principle than on the general position of party politics. It was possible to overcome it in the course of party politics, and during the time of the Block it was overcome.

Prince Bismarck, who was the successful opponent and great antithesis of the leader of the Progressives, bore striking and direct testimony to the recognition of the dawn of a new era. A few years after the Prince's retirement the excellent general director, Herr Ballin, suggested that he should have a look at the Hamburg harbour, which Bismarck, in spite of its nearness to Friedrichsruh, had not visited for a long time. After a tour round the harbour Herr Ballin took the eighty-year-old Prince on to one of the new transatlantic liners of the Hamburg-Amerika Company. Prince Bismarck had never yet seen a ship of such dimensions. He stopped when he set foot on the giant steamboat, looked at the ship for a long time, at the many steamers lying in the vicinity, at the docks and huge cranes, at the mighty picture presented by the harbour, and said at last : "I am stirred and moved. Yes, this is a new age —a new world." The mighty founder of the Empire, who fulfilled our national hopes and solved the problem of Germany's Continental policy, in his old age, with the never-failing insight of genius, recognised the future, the new tasks of the German Empire in the sphere of world politics.

[The world war has stopped activity in the port of Hamburg and has caused the German commercial flag to disappear from the seas. The victory of the German

## **Imperial Germany**

armies, which confirms Germany's political hegemony on the Continent and must, as a result of final success, ensure it, will also give new life to German ports and reopen the path of the seas, making them free for all time, for the proud progress of German world policy.]

## CHAPTER IX

### THE BEGINNINGS OF MILITARISM<sup>1</sup>

THE new German Empire, which in the course of phenomenally rapid progress developed world-wide commerce and industry, by means of its fleet secured a weapon of defence in the sphere of world politics. On the shoulders of her army Germany was borne upwards to that dizzy height whence the German people can direct their gaze upon the rest of the world.

In the present world war we learn that the brunt of the battle, which is to decide Germany's place among the nations, falls primarily upon the German nation under arms; on the Western, Eastern and Southern fronts the people are fighting in the battalions, batteries and squadrons of the army. The weapon that Prussia forged in olden times and bequeathed as a heritage to the new German Empire, now affords the German people and German soil victorious protection from a world of foes. Once again the old adage proves true, that States are maintained by the forces to which they owe their greatness.

The history of Brandenburg-Prussia, which achieved its first, but not its last, German triumph in founding the German Empire under Prussian leadership, is the history of the Prussian army; with its ups and downs it is the history of Prussia's varying fortunes in war.

<sup>1</sup> New to this edition.

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It is due not to educational caprice, but to the logic of historical facts, that in the first instance the German schoolboy learns the main outlines of his country's history as a history of war, the history of the gains achieved by victorious campaigns and of the stern and bitter consequences of lost battles.

Therein lies the difference between the history of Prussia and that of all other modern States; a parallel to it can only be found in that of the old Republic of Rome. In the seventeenth century France was enabled to rise to the position of leading Power in Europe, thanks to the brilliant statesmanship of a Richelieu, and to the guidance of Mazarin, who had learnt his subtle and baffling diplomatic art from his fellow-countryman, Macchiavelli. In spite of sensible military reverses in the war of the Spanish Succession, she was able in the eighteenth century, after the brilliant campaigns of Turenne and Condé, to achieve a magnificent political and cultural eminence, without being seriously affected by the inglorious defeat of Rosbach. It was not until the great Revolution that France was forced into the stern military school to which the Prussian State had been accustomed for four generations.

Set apart from the European struggles that the two revolutions of the seventeenth century brought in their wake, England was able to disengage and prepare those forces which opened to her the path of world power, and in the eighteenth century she succeeded with slight military effort in vanquishing her French rival, whom the campaigns of Frederick the Great tied to the Continental battlefield.

## Austrian Affairs

Peter the Great began, and his successors with their German advisers continued, the organisation of the immense forces of the peoples of Russia, and after the victory over Sweden this work was not appreciably affected by the success or failure of military enterprises. The battle of Zorndorf left next to no trace on Russian history; only when the drums of the wars of the Revolution drew Russia into the struggle for existence among the European Powers, did Russian history receive that military impress that it has borne ever since.

When the Habsburg Monarchy entered upon the seventeenth century, it was in full possession of the hereditary, old German Imperial power which was firmly based upon the power of the Habsburg family. The fate of Austria was to be determined by the sword; the continued existence of the Habsburg Monarchy was decided in the Turkish wars; on the battlefields of Silesia and Bohemia the fate of the old conception of the German Empire, indissolubly bound up with the crown of the Habsburgs, was sealed. But Viennese statecraft, with masterly adroitness, avoiding the consequences of the decisive results on the field of battle, caused the final verdict to be sought in diplomatic deliberations; and thus it came to pass that the wars of the eighteenth century exercised no epoch-making influence on the inner development of Austria. The fusion of civil and military affairs was reserved in the case of the Danube kingdom for a later date.

Matters followed a very different course in Brandenburg-Prussia. By the beginning of the seventeenth century which saw the decisive formation of States in

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Europe, and during the process of dissolution which the mediæval German Empire underwent for the space of two centuries, the reigning house of Hohenzollern had succeeded in acquiring and holding a number of scattered territories; this success may be traced to the calm and resolute, prudent and acquisitive policy of the Hohenzollern who possessed in an unwonted degree the talent to govern and rare consciousness of the will to rule. This utterly artificial State, protected by no natural frontiers, knit together by no tribal characteristics or ancient traditions, had been formed without much military effort at a time when Germany was almost entirely free from great military events. In troublous times, amid unquiet surroundings, the State could be maintained only by military forces. With precocious perspicacity the Great Elector while yet in his youth recognised this fact, when amid the chaotic confusion of the Thirty Years' War he seized the helm of the ship of State, which had drifted before the wind under the weak rule of his father. He rescued his realm, whose very existence was threatened at the time of his accession, by providing it with the means of defence. With the support of his quickly formed standing army he forced the States of Europe, weakened as they were by thirty years of warfare, to accede to the demands of Brandenburg.

At the Peace of Westphalia the kingdom of the Hohenzollern first made its appearance, consciously and with intention, as a military power. From that hour the entry of Brandenburg upon the field of European Continental politics must be dated; and in this sphere, this State, forming the nucleus of North Germany, as it pur-

## **Birth of the Military Tradition**

sued its upward course, had to achieve and maintain each right by force of arms; indeed it was unable to obtain fulfilment of the most modest demands, unless it was prepared to enforce them by sending forth its armies to do battle.

Unlike the South German States, whose geographical position was so immeasurably more favourable, Brandenburg-Prussia was not allowed the choice between the desire to gain in authority by dint of continuous warfare, not unattended by risk, and the maintenance of its acquired position and standing by abstention from any military enterprise in connection with the great quarrels of Europe. Brandenburg-Prussia had either to wax in greatness and power, or to cease to exist. The three territories in the west, the middle and the east of Germany had no natural barriers to protect them. The lands near the Rhine and in East Prussia lay at the storm centres of the European struggles. The Great Elector became involved in wars with Poland, France and Sweden in the effort, which he was in duty bound to make, to preserve his territories intact for the State. He learnt how open to invasion was the Mark of Brandenburg, when at the battle of Fehrbellin he had to rid his country of the Swedish invaders.

This battle of Fehrbellin, fought upon native soil for liberty and home, really marks the birth of Brandenburg-Prussia's fame in arms, the beginning of the military traditions of Prussian history; the entry of the Hohenzollern Monarchy upon the field of European Continental politics dates from the encounters on the Rhine of the Brandenburg troops with portions of Louis XIV.'s armies. From the very first Branden-

## Imperial Germany

burg-Prussia's military power was founded on the two great supporting forces of national life in the State: the love of home and country, and the conception of State power. These corresponded to the two tasks the army had to fulfil; that is, to protect the country from the ever-imminent danger of attack, and to demonstrate and extend the power of the State abroad. The life and fate of the Prussian army is closely interwoven with the life and destiny of the Prussian people; military traditions form an integral part of the history and memories of the whole nation, without distinction of class or rank. This is due to the fact that from the first the task of defending their homes and native soil fell to the lot of the Prussian military forces, both at the battle of Fehrbellin and later in the Seven Years' war.

Despite the aristocratic character of the corps of officers and the fact that a number of mercenaries were to be found in the ranks, the fusion of the army with the nation took place a full century earlier in Prussia than in the rest of Europe. Until 1793 the army in France had been almost exclusively at the service of diplomacy. Not only Voltaire, but all Paris received the news of the defeat at Rosbach with cheerful satisfaction, for Soubise, routed by Frederick the Great and his bold general Seydlitz, was unpopular because he was a favourite of Madame de Pompadour. After Narva and Pultowa the Russian forces fought in furtherance of foreign plans, the connection of which with Russian affairs was known only at the Tsar's court; and thus it actually happened that after the death of Elisabeth of Russia, in pursuance of some whim of

## The Necessity for Defence

the Tsar's, the Russian army had to range itself on the side of Frederick the Great against whom it had been fighting for six years. Not until 1812 was the Russian nation moved by the events of that year to participate in the fate of the Russian forces. In England a mercenary army, officered by the upper classes, which hitherto has practically merely fulfilled the duties of a colonial force, is only now, in the course of this war, being transformed into a national army.

In the great wars which Prussia has had to wage during the last two hundred and fifty years, her soil escaped the havoc wrought by hostile armies in battle only in the wars of 1866 and 1870-71. Fehrbellin, Eylau and Friedland, the Katzbach, Grossbeeren and Wartenburg tell the story of the past, when the liberty and life of both land and people depended upon the success or defeat of the army. In this world war the names of Tannenberg, Angerburg and Mülhausen have been added to the old list. History early taught us to recognise, and did not permit us to forget, that the first and foremost object of military power is the protection and defence of the country.

Since Prussia's frontiers enjoyed no natural protection, she was under necessity to place herself in a state of defence; driven to safeguard her very existence as a State, she acquired the power to strike abroad, and in military encounters with neighbouring States she mostly proved her superiority and won victories which resulted in a further extension of her power.

From the moment when the Hohenzollern Monarchy first showed signs of playing an independent part in Europe, the other States on the Continent made it very

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plain that nothing would be yielded to the young State but what it acquired at the point of the sword. The Great Elector learnt in connection with the Silesian and Pomeranian problems, what Frederick William I. learnt in the Jülich-Cleves question, namely, that the Great Powers were unwilling to concede any rights to Prussia.

When Prussia entered the field of Continental politics she was forced to seek her salvation by the sword, for she clearly foresaw that there was no hope of achieving anything by diplomatic action. Recognising this fact, Frederick the Great only ventilated the Silesian question after having fought and won battles. It required the Seven Years' War to enable Prussia to obtain a seat and voice in the council of Europe. On the occasion of the division of Poland, Prussia for the first time realised an increase of power without bloodshed, but of what she gained she was able to maintain only as much as Frederick the Great had won as a belated prize of the Seven Years' War. In Napoleonic times Prussia's foreign policy was once more dependent on her sword. The frontiers of 1815 testified to victorious battles. After many fruitless efforts to effect the union of Germany in accordance with Prussian ideas and without an armed conflict, the masterly statecraft of Bismarck, true to Prussian traditions, succeeded in finding the solution of this German problem in a victorious campaign. The stony path of Prussia's Continental policy is marked by blood and iron, and over every decisive success the standards of the Prussian army flutter.

At all times in the course of its great history, the future of the Prussian State depended on the efficiency

## Other Armies

of its armed forces and their readiness for immediate action ; at all times the safety of the population and its means of livelihood depended on Prussia's power to defend herself. Frederick the Great could boast with justice that, "The world rests no more securely on the shoulders of Atlas than Prussia on the shoulders of her army."

In every State the army in its strength and weakness, in its traditional characteristics, reflects the form of the country's government. If constitutional changes are made in the State, these changes are bound to influence the army.

This has been France's experience ; in consequence of the great Revolution the army of the Bourbon Monarchy became the revolutionary army ; this in turn on the foundation of the Napoleonic Empire became the *grande armée* with its youthful and ambitious generalship ; and finally, after the fall of the Second Empire, the citizen army of the Republic was formed.

In the English army, with its aristocratic corps of officers and its mercenary rank and file, the rule of the British nobility found its true expression ; now that, owing to the world war, a citizen army is being formed in England too, no doubt its path has been made easy by the breaking of the power of the House of Lords and the assimilation of the British form of government to that of the Latin democracies. The English army will hardly become a monarchic one in our sense of the word, but in view of the preponderating power vested in Parliament by the Constitution, it will remain what it originally was, a parliamentary army.

The Prussian army was the creation of the Monarchy

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and has remained monarchic. The German army of the present day is a monarchic army, because the German Empire is in the fullest sense of the word a monarchic State.

The Prussian kings created their army at a time when in all European Continental States there was need of princes with absolute power to maintain the rule of the States and to extend their might. Their armies consisted of mercenaries from all ends of the earth, but led by officers drawn from the native aristocracy. But whereas the armies of most of the European States retained their character for as long as the absolute power of the princes lasted, the Hohenzollern gave to the development of the Prussian army a different bent peculiar to itself.

King Frederick William I. was not merely the harsh drill sergeant of the guards at Potsdam who later on proved invincible, he was also the creator of the spirit of the Prussian army which has borne the Prussian and German flags from Mollwitz and Hohenfriedberg to Tannenberg and Verdun. Out of the crowd of rough, brave country squires he made the Prussian corps of officers, with their ultra-strict ideas of duty and honour, their intimate connection, both outwardly and inwardly, with the men entrusted to their care, their spirit of comradeship, their martial pride and their loyalty to the sovereign. This king, who wore a soldier's uniform, was the highest officer in the army; the officers who wore the king's uniform ranked as the highest class in the State, to which the king himself belonged.

This same monarch who attached the troops firmly to

## Forcing the Military Spirit

the Monarchy, and in his capacity as the first and greatest organiser of armies, realised that the army must be closely connected with the nation itself, so that the Monarchy, the people and the State should be fused into one whole in the army. Seeing far beyond the possibilities and the limitations to organisation of his own times, he wrote in the first paragraphs of the barrack regulations, "Every Prussian subject is born to bear arms." That was the fundamental idea of universal military service which owes its origin not to the French Revolution, but to the Prussian Monarchy. Long before Lafayette and Carnot, the Prussian soldier-king conceived the idea of creating an army by means of obligatory military service on the part of all members of the State capable of bearing arms: the complete blending of the army and the people.

In this conception he forestalled the events of later days. The subsequent history of Prussia, which decided the fate of the country, provided the necessary conditions for its realisation. The seven years' struggle for their very existence was the needful factor to bring about the complete unity of the Monarchy, State and People in Prussia. During the last years of the war Frederick the Great had reinforced his army almost exclusively with troops raised in the country itself, and the Prussian people had learnt that the old terror of the recruiting drums was a lesser evil than the terror of hostile invasion and devastation.

The first brilliant victories of King Frederick had implanted a feeling of national pride in the Prussian people, and had roused them to a sympathetic interest in the fortunes of the State. The years of dire neces-

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sity, when defeat threatened, awakened a more definite consciousness of participation in the State, and the fortunes of the State made a sensible impression upon the outer life of the whole nation. Army, State and People became interwoven.

During twenty years of feeble policy on the part of the Cabinet and of occasional half-hearted military expeditions, the consciousness of this unity lapsed. It awoke again with sudden force, when the catastrophe that befell the Prussian army at Jena resulted in the crippling of the State and French domination. The Prussian people never for a moment doubted that its lot could not be changed except by force of arms, by the might and victory of the Prussian army. No need for the French example, with which they were confronted, to prepare the soil for universal military service. The whole nation was bent heart and soul on its introduction, for they had seen the freedom and might of their State, built up by Prussian arms, fall before superior enemy forces.

It was Prussia's good fortune that every time the nation and the State flagged and relaxed their efforts, the consequences were disastrous; it is fortunate for her, too, that hitherto the right men have always arisen to save her. When the great necessity of the hour was the reorganisation of the Prussian military forces, the master mind of Scharnhorst was at her service. His regulations for the army were not carried out in detail until after 1815, and then not completely nor quite in accordance with his ideas. But he, and he alone, created the forms into which the armed arising of the whole people in 1813 and 1814 could be fitted. In the

## National Idealism

war of liberation, the Prussian army became the nation in arms, but Scharnhorst had secured it that the nation in arms became the Prussian army with its traditional regulations and rules. The spirit of 1813 did not take the place of the spirit of the armies of Frederick the Great and of Frederick William I., but the two were fused. The corps of officers, placed on the broader basis of the educated middle classes, took up the traditions of the old Prussian corps of officers, and the troops were trained in the same school under the guidance of the king.

Because the Prussian army was so intimately mingled with the life of the people, and nevertheless had remained rooted in the traditions of a century and a half, the storms of the March Revolution were not able to affect it. It had to such an extent become the instrument, and at the same time the motive force, of the great European tasks which the State had undertaken, that it was raised above the discussions which arose within the State on the question of remodelling it in accordance with the times. During his time of service with the army every Prussian, no matter what his political views, so to speak, entered the immediate service of the State and the king. The nation in the King's uniform preserved the conception of the State, its national consciousness, in its purest form, untouched by political considerations. Time has been unable to alter this in the smallest respect. The world war shows us the whole of that portion of the people which is capable of bearing arms, completely filled with that idealism that is the spirit of the Prussian army.

By a peculiar dispensation, the statesman, who by

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means of victorious wars created the German Empire, brought his policy to a successful issue in the course of a struggle to enlarge the army in accordance with the creative ideas of William I. The history of the army and Prussia's European policy were interdependent, even at the moment when Prussia's greatest task was on the eve of accomplishment. The founding of the German Empire took place amid the thunder of cannon, while on the battlefield the Prussian flag waved in company with those of the rest of Germany.

Among the great gifts which Germany owes to Prussia the greatest will always be the Prussian army, the outcome of centuries of labour, which the storms and disorders of time have only made stronger and better. Unquestioningly the German States adopted the organisation and traditions of the Prussian army. History narrates what courage and what military ability had been displayed from time immemorial in non-Prussian Germany among all the tribes and in all the single States: in Bavaria and Saxony, Baden and Wurtemberg, among the Frisians and the Franks of the Rhine, the Hanoverians and Hessians, the people of Holstein, the Hanseatic towns, Mecklenburg and Thuringia. The military prowess of all Germany reached its zenith on the battlefields of France, when the whole German nation in arms fought as Prussia had taught it to do.

In the years that have elapsed between the war which brought about the union and this world war, the armed forces of the Empire have been welded into one whole. The military history of Prussia took its place among the great memories of the past.

## The Lesson of 1916

The heir of Frederick William I. became the war lord of the German army, of the German nation in arms. German armies are performing deeds of unparalleled heroism from the Dvina to the Meuse; amid the hardships of the present the German nation looks forward with confidence to a greater future for the German Fatherland, won by the victories of all members of the German race irrespective of State or tribe; meanwhile our defeated enemies are filled with wrath against Prussia, the military taskmaster of the German past, and they violently abuse the spirit of the Prussian army, Prussian militarism, which to-day is the spirit of the German nation in arms.

There was a time, not so long ago, when German theorists, men who could not or would not learn the lessons of history, in their chagrin longed for a future which should set German life free from Prussian militarism. The present has taught them the lesson which the past could not teach, for to-day it is by militarism that not only the liberty, but also the future of the German nation is being saved.

## CHAPTER X

### MILITARISM AS A COHESIVE FORCE<sup>1</sup>

No form of government exists in which there has not been a vigorous opposition to what is best and strongest in it. Often this opposition is roused and takes form, owing to comparisons between the institutions of the State and those of other countries. Governments that give way to agitations in which foreign institutions are set up as models for reform at home, mistake their loftiest task, which is to maintain in all its strength and individuality the State entrusted to their care.

In the case of the German people the danger that political institutions abroad should determine the tendency of political ambitions at home has always been particularly great, for it is one of the strong points of the German that his clear gaze penetrates beyond the confines of his country, and appreciates sound intellectual and cultural qualities peculiar to countries abroad. That became manifest during the uncertain years of the nineteenth century, when Germans, learned and unlearned, in their justifiable anxiety to achieve some constitutional form of State government, racked their brains to determine whether French or English constitutional institutions ought to serve as models for the new order in Germany.

<sup>1</sup> New to this edition.

## Struggle Against Political Influence

It was very difficult in those critical times for the various governments, which were weak in themselves rather than strong, to maintain the essential characteristics of the German State institutions upon their monarchic foundations. In particular the government of Prussia had to resist with all the energy at its disposal efforts tending to modify the traditional organisation of the Prussian army, or to loosen the ties which so closely bound the army, and especially the corps of officers, to the person of the monarch, and to drag the army into the sphere of parliamentary, that is to say, of political, influence. Thanks chiefly to the energy and courage of the Prince of Prussia, who later became the Emperor William I., the Prussian army was maintained without any alteration in its traditional spirit and organisation, and was preserved from a development in the course of which it would, like the French army, have become a bone of contention between the different parties in the country struggling to gain ascendancy.

A development possessing such characteristics would have been much more dangerous in Germany than in France, where the modern citizen army, unlike the Prussian army, is the work not of the Monarchy, but of the Republic and of the parties of the Revolution. After the fall of the Monarchy the French corps of officers was formed with a view to the political principles of the parties then in power. The great generals of the wars of the Revolution were appointed and dismissed by the various parties. The army often played an active part in later changes in the form of government. Party favour in the corps of officers, which was displayed in such ugly guise in the Dreyfus scandal,

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has not been without some influence on the appointment of officers even in the course of the world war. Though the achievements of the French army are worthy of honest respect; though we may concede that the Frenchman has a right to be proud of his army, its character and its efficiency, yet we have every reason to be thankful that the German army, with its organisation, its spirit and its traditions handed down by the centuries, in this world war represents, by its might, its will and its deeds, that which is superior to all politics and all party differences—the patriotism of the German.

Of all the miracles that Germany has wrought before the eyes of the world since the beginning of the war, probably nothing surprised our foes abroad more than the conscious, vigorous unanimity with which the Germans of all States and all parties went forth to meet this deadly peril in order to conquer it. Such Germans as had not been misled on the subject of the true state of national feeling by the apparently bitter struggles of home politics, expected nothing different. But abroad little or nothing was known of the forces of unity which existed in conjunction with sources of difference among the German people. There they did not know, and possibly could not know, that the army, which summoned the German people to the last and greatest test of vitality, was specially adapted to unite the nation and keep it so united, just because during a long period of peace it proved to be a powerful instrument of German unity.

Voces in enemy lands, and also in neutral countries where the population for the most part was, and con-

## International Misconceptions

tinues to be, hostile to us in this war, have taught us what conception of the character and qualities of Prusso-German militarism is prevalent in the world at large which hates the German nation, either because it does not know it or because it fears it. The voice of our national conscience tells us what German militarism really is: the best thing we have achieved in the course of our national development as a State and as a people.

The caricature that Germany's foes behold and that they so firmly believe to be true to nature, because, alas! Germans have lent a hand in drawing it, depicts German militarism as a despotic power, wielded by a military caste, ruling the life of the people, and at the bidding of the Monarchy brutally suppressing the liberty of German men and the activities even of those democratic tendencies of the century which are well justified. This caricature shows German militarism as the special power of the Prussian State which by dint of brute force keeps the German States chained to the Empire. According to ideas abroad each small German State can desire nothing more ardently than to be detached from the organisation of the German armed forces and to continue its existence, to quote Treitschke, as an "Academy of Arts or a Stock Exchange." The German citizen must, according to them, regard it as a deliverance if the army with its stern discipline of command and obedience were eliminated from German life.

We cannot expect the Frenchman to realise that it was the ever-threatening, restless ambition of the French nation which finally forced Prussia and Germany to place the whole of their military resources in readiness.

## Imperial Germany

In view of the Englishman's traditional ignorance of the conditions of life and general circumstances among the nations on the Continent, he cannot be expected to understand how weapons grew more and more formidable during the many centuries of friction between the European States, and that Prussia-Germany was bound to acquire the strongest armaments and the sharpest sword, because the formation of States in Central Europe was only possible in the course of uninterrupted warfare, and because there were no natural barriers to protect such German frontiers as German arms could not defend.

Nor do we Germans wish hostile or unfriendly foreigners to think that the nation, which more than any other inclines to work thoughtfully, independently and assiduously for the civilisation of humanity, did not find it easy, both mentally and morally, to set its faith in its strength above its faith in its ideals. Those times, let us hope, are past when the German people, with ingenuous confidence in success, sought understanding abroad for its character and its inner worth. Now, indeed, is the time for the German nation itself to recognise its proper character without reserve; then it will discover where its weakness and where its strength lies. Then it can assert before the whole world that its greatest strength, which has stood the test of the past and the present, is to be found in that which in the hour of direst need and danger saved the life of Germany: German militarism.

The true picture of militarism, which we Germans see, is indeed very different from that which confronts the prejudiced imagination of the foreigner. Different,

## The Army To-Day

too, from that which even in Germany a few parties, politicians and newspapers had conjured up before the war for political and tactical purposes, probably not in strict accordance with their inner convictions.

The army to-day is what history has made it: the vigorous expression of the unity of Empire, State and people. So it is in France as well. The Republican State and the French nation are interwoven in the army. No German will deny this, and no German doubted it when the catastrophe of the world war befell Europe. In Germany national unity finds expression in the army in a different form, corresponding to the difference in character of the life of the State and the nation. People beyond the German frontiers refuse to recognise this, and to their own disadvantage they imagined a non-existent antagonism between the German army and the German people.

When Prince Bismarck, soon after his accession to office, expressed his clear recognition of historic needs in the well-known phrase that the German problem must be solved by blood and iron, this most soldierly of all the great German statesmen since the days of Frederick the Great knew very well that the same weapons which he credited with the power of bringing about an unavoidable separation, would also have the power to achieve the needful union. Before the blood of all the German tribes had flowed for the common German cause on the battlefields of France, the German States had already taken the most decisive step toward their union with Prussia by adopting the main features of Prussian army organisation. Military union preceded political union.

## Imperial Germany

After the founding of the Empire, the idea of the unity of the German people and of the fellowship of all the States found acceptance more quickly and more easily in the army than anywhere else. The particularist tendencies, which continued to exist here and there after 1871, did not in the least affect the army. Despite their affection for their own State with its narrower limits, and especially for their own princes, officers and men in the north and the south felt themselves to be first and foremost members of the German army, of the German nation in arms. None of the institutions of the Prussian State found such integral acceptance in the Empire as the army. Thus the intimate bonds uniting the Federal States with the leading State of Prussia found their most spontaneous expression in the adoption of Prussian army institutions. While justifiable peculiarities in the individual Federal States are fully recognised, more especially the unique position conceded to the Bavarians, the nation is conscious of the existence of one and only one united German army.

Bismarck's great gift of divination consisted in this : when he made decisions which had the most far-reaching consequences, at one and the same time and to the same remarkable extent, he was capable of embracing in his gaze the world and the world's history, and of looking deep into the soul of the German people and into Germany's prospective career. This gift was probably never more clearly exemplified than when he brought about the union of the States of Germany by means of wars, led up to with masterly diplomacy. These wars enabled him to reach the goal at which he aimed in Prussia's foreign policy, and later on in that

## Founding the German Empire

of the North German Federation—namely, the founding of the Empire.

In the very moment of the crisis, the conception of German unity was released from the stifling atmosphere of factional quarrels and home politics. Acting independently of the manifold prejudices and fetters of party politics in which the conception of the Empire had been entangled for more than a generation, the German nation in arms, which stood upon the soil of France, took up the work and founded the Empire on the great military traditions of Germany. Thereby the army with its spirit and its traditions became not only materially, but also spiritually the support of the German Empire, a support beyond the reach of home politics, particularism and parties. If in this world war there was one hope of our foreign foes that must prove vain, it was the hope that the call to arms and common service in the army throughout Germany would animate particularist traditions with new life and shake the unity of the Empire. The military threads which Bismarck had succeeded in weaving into his great work, the founding of the Empire, made the German Imperial Army representative of the conception of the Empire, just as the Prussian army had been representative of the Prussian State. On this occasion, too, the army of all Germany followed the traditions of the Prussian army and assured their continuance in the future.

State particularism, which for centuries played havoc with Germany's welfare, was first overcome by the nation in arms, and was chiefly reduced to impotence by the spirit of the army. Thus, during the years which

## Imperial Germany

have passed since the Empire was founded, up to the outbreak of the world war, the German army was the means by which political, social and religious breaches were healed, and which welded the Germans into one united nation within the new Empire. Not that the army in so doing consciously fulfilled a definite mission. The specifically German turn which Scharnhorst's creative genius had given to the conception of universal military service, which Boyen, King William and Roon had further developed, proved capable of accommodating the peculiarities of German national life without exercising any constraint.

In contradistinction to the French army, the Prussian, and later on the German, army has never come under the influence of prevailing political tendencies, either as regards its views or its organisation. It has remained as unaffected by revolutionary as by reactionary ideas, whereas the French army after its glorious Napoleonic era had to submit to becoming a Royalist army once more, and after that a Republican; then again a Napoleonic, and finally a Republican army for the second time. While the religious struggle (*Kulturkampf*) made not the slightest impression on the German army, in France the campaign against the Church, fought out under Combes and Briand, spread to the ranks of the soldiers.

In France, too, where political differences, despite the passionate zeal with which opponents defend their views, do not penetrate very deeply into national life, the influence of politics on the army did not materially affect its unity.

In Germany the consequences would have been im-

## A United Germany

measurably serious if political and religious quarrels had spread to the army. The relation of direct allegiance in which the German army stands to the monarch, indicates *de facto* certain rights of the monarchy as well as the severance of the nation in arms from the political, religious and social differences of the people, differences to which the monarch also stands superior. The law of the land complies with the highest national demands and gives every citizen, irrespective of class and profession, the proud privilege of feeling himself simply and solely a German, as long as he wears the king's uniform.

We Germans did not need the world war to make us realise that the German people under arms, with its banner unfurled, is united and rises superior to the many differences and divisions which have always existed in the national life of Germany. We knew that, if it came to real warfare, that spirit would manifest itself with redoubled might, which had dwelt in the barracks and on the parade ground, the spirit of obedience ennobled by comradeship, of disciplined unity and of well-regulated equality.

Because it owes direct allegiance and obedience to the monarch, the German army is intimately bound up with the conception of the Empire and the idea of its unity; owing to the special character of our system of defence and of our army organisation, the army, far from being merely an instrument of power over the people in the hands of the government, is, on the contrary, an integral part of the life of the nation. It is, though in a different way, as representative of the unity of the nation as are the parliamentary assemblies.

## Imperial Germany

In the army and its service there is no room for political and religious contrasts; in it historical differences are harmoniously blended, and for this very reason they appear with greater emphasis among the German people, because our historical development has prevented us from crushing the manifold forms of intellectual, social and public life by violent pressure exerted from below at the instigation of the government.

Universal military service integrally adopted as it has been in Germany, recognises without distinction that it is the duty of every man to defend his country. But Scharnhorst's creation has provided that the forces, which were acquired by intellectual and social gradations in the development of the nation, should be incorporated in the army by means of universal military service. It was absolutely justifiable and necessary to break with the traditions of the Fredericks, in so far as these demanded a corps of officers formed entirely by members of the aristocracy; and the creators of the Prusso-German national army were led to adopt the specifically German idea of a corps of officers formed from members of the intellectually superior classes, and to make the right to enjoy the rank of an officer dependent on proof of the attainment of a certain standard of education. Thus that distinction in national life which has the fullest justification, has found a place in the structure of the army, without in the least affecting the principle of equal obligation for all. Through the material of the national army, an institution of a democratic nature, runs a thread of the modern aristocracy. The happy thought of making entry into the corps of officers contingent upon election by the corps of officers,

## The Foundations of Discipline

made it possible in the structure of the national army to take account of the structure of the nation.

Probably nothing in the past, as in the present, has to such a degree assured the superiority of our army as the fact that the leading position, which is the natural due of those who rank highest in intellect and education, has been retained for them in the army. In this way obedience and discipline, apart from all formal regulations, were founded upon the natural confidence which, especially among the German people, the unlettered man has always gladly reposed in the man of education. The world war has shown that devotion and contempt of death are the common heritage of every German soldier. But it has also been a song in praise of mutual confidence between officers and men, such as the world has never seen.

As the Roman Catholic Church has such a perfect organisation, because its institutions are only the outward forms of inner forces which exist in the Catholic faith and in every devout Catholic, so the German army is an organisation of unique perfection, because in its institutions and regulations, its relation to State life and national life, it takes account of those forces which support and form the State and the nation.

More by means of the army than by means of the constitution or of civil and common law do the State and the nation in Germany achieve unity. When the whole nation takes up arms in defence of the Empire, the barriers fall which political strife has raised between the individual and the State, just as the breaches are closed which existed in the nation itself.

The great political conceptions, to varied interpreta-

## **Imperial Germany**

tions of which all political quarrels are ultimately reducible, the conceptions of monarchy, aristocracy and democracy are all merged in one another when the German nation becomes an army under the command of their Imperial War Lord and the leadership of a corps of officers, chosen from the modern aristocracy of intellect, culture and education; all these are united by a democratic sense of comradeship which lays upon all Germans, without distinction of class or profession, one single and glorious obligation, and in distress and danger makes all Germans brothers. The spirit of German militarism, as Prussia first developed it and Germany adopted it, is every whit as monarchical as it is aristocratic and democratic, and it would cease to be German and the mighty expression of German Imperial military power and military efficiency if it were to change. If our enemies, to whom with God's help our militarism will bring defeat, abuse it, we know that we must preserve it, for to us it means victory and the future of Germany.

This unparalleled fight for existence which Germany is waging is the great test in the world's history of the strength and power of resistance of all that which, in the remote as in the immediate past, government and people have built up in Germany. This applies first and foremost to the German army; for it is the army which, as the work of centuries, is to-day exposed to the severest test.

Prussia and Germany may have failed sometimes to modify traditional institutions in accordance with the progress of modern times, fearing that by taking such steps they might lose their safe anchorage in the past,

## **Victorious in the World War**

in history. This cannot be said with regard to the army. From the days when the Great Elector created the first Brandenburg military force up to the most recent times, during which the Emperor William II. always considered it his supreme duty as a ruler, side by side with the building of the navy, to increase and strengthen the army, both qualitatively and quantitatively, untiring energy and unique diligence have been unceasingly expended on the German army, whether the State were rich or poor, secure or exposed to danger, victorious or unsuccessful—whether there was opposition from abroad or from uncomprehending majorities in Parliament. Those responsible for the organisation of the army have always seen to it that the spirit of the times should penetrate the spirit of the army, and thus rejuvenate the spirit of the past.

The band of mercenaries, led by rude country squires, which under the Elector won the battle of Fehrbellin, has thus grown to be the great national army of the Germans, which, led by a Hohenzollern who wears the Imperial crown, victoriously withstands the world in the war of 1914. The spirit of the twentieth century has become merged in the memory of Prusso-German glory in the field, and to-day, as long ago, there resound beneath the old flags the words of Heinrich Kleist, the poet who sang of the German fight for freedom, and the fame of Prussian arms : “Into the dust with Brandenburg’s foes !”

## CHAPTER XI

### POLITICAL DEFICIENCIES OF GERMANY

THE history of our home policy, with the exception of a few bright spots, is to the time of the world war a history of political mistakes. Despite the abundance of merits and great qualities with which the German nation is endowed, political talent has hitherto been denied it. No people has found it so difficult as the Germans to attain solid and permanent political institutions, although we were the first, after the downfall of antiquity and the troubrous times of the migration of nations, to acquire that stable national existence which is founded on might, and which is the preliminary condition for the growth of real political life. Though, thanks to our military prowess, we found it easy enough to overcome foreign obstruction and interference in our national life, at all times we found it was a very hard task to overcome even small obstacles in the path of our own political development.

It has often happened to other nations that military disasters, disasters in their foreign policy, have severely injured and even overthrown their form of government at home. We Germans, owing to our political clumsiness, have by the formlessness and confusion of our internal national life often defrauded ourselves of successes won in battle, and for centuries rendered an effec-

## Not a Political People

tive foreign policy impossible by our narrow-minded and short-sighted home policy.

We were not a political people. Not that we ever lacked penetration and understanding for the sequence of political things, or for the essence and association of the religious, moral, social, legal and industrial forces which condition politics. We have always possessed this political knowledge to the same extent as our contemporaries, and even to a greater. Nor did we fail to realise our own peculiar political shortcomings. But what we did often lack, is the art of proceeding from insight to practical application, and the greater art of doing the right thing, politically, by a sure creative instinct, instead of only after much thought and considerable cogitation.

How can it otherwise be explained that in the struggle between different nationalities the German has so often succumbed to the Czech and the Slovene, the Magyar and the Pole, the French and the Italian?—that in this sphere the German has usually come off second best in comparison with almost all his neighbours?

Politically, as in no other sphere of life, there was an obvious disproportion between our knowledge and our power. We can boast at present of a particularly flourishing state of political science and especially political economy. The influence of deep learning on practical politics was seldom felt. This was not because only a small class of educated men, and not the mass of the people, participate and take an interest in knowledge.

The German nation, on the contrary, more than any

## **Imperial Germany**

other people, and particularly as regards the lower classes, is eager to learn and capable of so doing. Among many fine traits of character that has ever been one of the finest our nation possesses. But for the German the knowledge of political things was usually a purely intellectual matter, which he did not care to connect with the actual occurrences of political life. It would have been possible for him to do so only in the rarest cases. For, although well-developed logical powers result in good judgment, yet there is too often a lack of that political discernment which can grasp the bearing of acquired knowledge on the life of the community. The want of political aptitude sets a narrow limit, even to highly developed political science.

During my term of office I took a lively interest in furthering political instruction, and I expect the results to be better and better the more Germans of all classes and all degrees of culture are given the opportunity of following such courses of instruction. But much water will flow under the bridges before these weaknesses and deficiencies in our political character, which are partly innate and partly acquired by education, can be so removed.

In the meantime Fate, who, as we all know, is an excellent but expensive teacher, [has undertaken to educate us politically by a tremendous war which has called forth all the splendid and incomparably fine qualities of our nation. It will, let us hope, not only heal our wounds and mend our weaknesses, but also in addition provide us with political talent.] In spite of a past full of political disasters, we did not possess that talent. I once had a conversation on this subject with the late

## The Weak Point

Ministerial Director Althoff. "Well, what can you expect?" replied that distinguished man in his humorous way. "We Germans are the most learned nation in the world and the best soldiers. We have achieved great things in all the sciences and arts; the greatest philosophers, the greatest poets and musicians are Germans. Of late we have occupied the foremost place in the natural sciences and in almost all technical spheres, and in addition to that we have accomplished an enormous industrial development. How can you wonder that we are political asses? There must be a weak point somewhere."

[“A sense of the general good supports the State, self-seeking disintegrates it. Hence it is useful to point out the general good to the individual.” Plato wrote thus more than two thousand years ago.]

Political sense connotes a sense of the general good. That is just what the Germans lack. Politically gifted nations, sometimes consciously, sometimes instinctively, at the right moment, and even without being driven by necessity, set the general interests of the nation above their particular pursuits and desires. It is a characteristic of the German to employ his energy individually, and to subordinate the general good to his narrower and more immediate interests. That was what Goethe was thinking of in his cruel remark, so often quoted, that the Germans are very capable individually, and wretchedly inefficient in the bulk.

The instinct, proper to man, to unite in societies, associations and communities for special purposes, this natural, political instinct reaches its highest development in the community which forms a State. Where

## Imperial Germany

this highest form of development is attained consciously, the lower forms become of less and less importance as a rule. Society, united for national purposes, subordinates to itself all the smaller individual societies which serve ideal or material ends; not forcibly or suddenly, but in the course of the gradual expansion of national consciousness.

The progress of this development indicates the progress of national unity and solidarity. Nations with a strong political sense meet this development half way, the German has often vigorously opposed it—not on account of ill-will, or a lack of patriotic feeling, but following the dictates of his nature, which feels more at home in small associations than when included in the community of the whole nation. Herr von Miquel once said to me in his caustic way, as the result of forty years of parliamentary experience: "German Parliaments, in a comparatively short space of time, mostly sink to the level of a district council, interested in nothing but local questions and personal squabbles. In our Parliament a debate rarely maintains a high level for more than one day; on the second day the ebb begins, and then bagatelles are discussed as futilely and in as much detail as possible."

This national inclination is responsible for the vogue for Associations and Clubs in Germany. The old joke that two Germans cannot meet without founding a club has a serious significance. The German feels at home in his clubs and societies. And if such an association exists for greater purposes of an industrial or a political kind, then its members, and especially its leaders, soon see in it the point of Archimedes whence

## The Association Fetish

they would like to unhinge the whole political world. [They are then apt to forget the wise words of Gottfried Keller, that any agitation must always be directed towards making life sound and prosperous, and must never become an end in itself.]

The late member of the Reichstag, von Kardorff, said to me, not long before his death : "Look what maniacs we are about associations. The association itself becomes for us an end in itself. The *Alliance Française* collected millions to establish French schools abroad, but it never dreamt of shaping the policy of the Government. Our Pan-German Association has done much to arouse national feeling, but, on the other hand, it considers itself the supreme court of appeal in questions of foreign policy. The Navy League has done great service in popularising the idea of a navy, but has not always resisted the temptation to prescribe to the Government and Reichstag what course to pursue in naval policy. The Association of Farmers, founded at a time of great stress in the agricultural world, has benefited the farmers as a whole very greatly, but has now reached such a point that it wants to treat everything in its own way, and runs great risk of over-shooting the mark. We get so wrapped up in the idea of our association that we can see nothing beyond it."

In smaller things the German can easily find men of like ideas and like interests, but in great matters, very rarely. The more specialised the aim, the quicker is a German association founded to further it ; and, what is more, such associations are not temporary, but permanent. It is to this tendency toward the individual that the strength of our great Associations and their

## Imperial Germany

importance in our political life is to be attributed. [The Association of Farmers has more than 300,000 members, the Catholic People's League 700,000; the social democratic Trades Unions numbered 260,000 members in 1895, 680,000 in 1900, 1½ million in 1906, and 2½ million in 1912. In no other country do the associations number so many members; in no other country do associations and leagues play such a part in political life. But there is a reverse side to this bent towards association for special purposes.] The wider the aim, the more slowly do the Germans unite to attain it, and the more liable they are, on the slightest excuse, to forsake this fellowship which cost so much trouble to found.

Our nation is undoubtedly, in a high degree, capable of uniting in strong and purposeful action in national movements. [That was proved in August, 1914, and] there are plenty of instances in our history. [Treitschke once said that foreigners have no notion of how deep the springs of German life lie. We ourselves had no idea what treasures of devotion and renunciation, of fearlessness and self-restraint this great nation possessed. What gifts have been showered on the battlefields and in the laboratories, in the trenches and in the offices. Our technical men and our chemists were the equals of the members of our General Staff. The inventiveness of our industrialists rivalled the courage of our U-boat men and our airmen. From the material and the intellectual point of view, the German nation can look back upon the mightiest effort that has ever been put forth in the world. The achievements of our people since the beginning of the world war have never been equalled, let alone surpassed.]

## The War of Liberation

Thank Heaven, we have never entirely lacked national consciousness, enthusiasm, and self-sacrifice, and, in the times of greatest disruption, the feeling that all belonged to one nation never died out, but, on the contrary, grew to a passionate longing. Our periods of greatest political weakness, times when the State was clearly on the verge of collapse, were the most flourishing days of the intellectual life of our nation. The classic writers of the Middle Ages, as well as those of modern times, created our national literature in the midst of the decaying and decayed public life of the nation. [If we were forged into one nation by Bismarck's hammer, that was only possible because our thinkers and poets, the intellectual leaders of the people, had already roused our national consciousness.]

On the other hand, we, as a people, never lost the consciousness of our political unity and independence to such an extent as to bear the yoke of foreign rule for any length of time. In the hour of need the Germans found, in the depths of their hearts, the will and the strength to overcome national disintegration. The War of Liberation a hundred years ago, which has lesser prototypes in earlier centuries, will ever remain a token of German national will-power and love of liberty, [and all the world must reverence the unassuming greatness, the faith in God, the determination and the devotion to duty which our nation without exception exhibits in the present war. If in former years individuals sometimes gave way to patriotic anxiety, in view of many a manifestation of recent times, they will now thank God for having vouchsafed us the greatest happiness—that of living to see how our nation, in the time

## **Imperial Germany**

of storm and danger, increased in stature and surpassed itself.]

But in contradistinction to the nations that are, politically speaking, more happily endowed, the expressions of German national unity are rather occasional than permanent. [Lack of continuity from the time of Charles the Great to that of Bismarck was really the characteristic and the ill-fate of German history. The attempts of the Carolingian Kings and the Ottos, of the Salic monarchs and the Hohenstaufen were never pursued to a final success; the Emperors of the House of Habsburg who made the same attempt stopped half-way. The fifty years that separate the Congress of Vienna from the final decision on the battlefields of Bohemia, the years from 1814 to 1866, produced only unsuccessful experiments. It was chiefly owing to this lack of stability that the political union of Germany came about so late, while in France and England, Russia and Spain, a like process had taken place much earlier.]

“I have sung of the Germans’ June,  
But that will not last till October,”

was Goethe’s lament not long after the War of Liberation. Only too often with us the union dictated by necessity was followed again by disruption into smaller political associations, states, tribes, classes; or, in modern times, into parties that preferred their own narrower tasks and aims to those of the nation at large, and degraded the great deeds of national unity by making them the object of ugly party quarrels. In German history national unity has for centuries been the

## Unrivalled Exploits

exception, and separatism in various forms, adapted to the circumstances of the times, the rule.

Hardly any nation's history is so full of great successes and achievements in every sphere of man's activity. German military and intellectual exploits are unrivalled. But the history of no nation can tell of such an utter disproportion for centuries and centuries, between political progress on the one hand and capability and achievements on the other. The centuries of political impotence, during which Germany was crowded out of the ranks of the Great Powers, have little to tell of the defeat of German arms by foreign forces, with the exception of the time of Napoleon I. Our prolonged national misfortune was not due to foreigners; it was our own fault.

We first appear in history as a nation split up into hostile tribes. The German Empire of mediæval times was not founded by the voluntary union of the tribes, but by the victory of one single tribe over the others, who for a long time unwillingly bore the rule of the stronger. The most brilliant period of our history, the period when the German Empire led Europe unopposed, was a time of national unity, in which the tribes and princes found a limit to their self-will in the will and the power of the Emperor. The Empire of the Middle Ages only succumbed in the struggle with the Papacy, because Roman politicians had succeeded in rousing opposition to the Emperor in Germany. The weakening of Imperial power afforded the princes a welcome opportunity for strengthening their own. While political life in Germany was split up into a large number of independent cities and territorial communities, in France,

## Imperial Germany

under the strong rule of her kings, a united State was formed, which took the place of Germany as leader of Europe.

Then came the religious split. The German territorial States, that for long had been united with the Empire in appearance only, became open enemies owing to the religious quarrel, and (a thing that is essentially characteristic of our nation) the German States, Protestant as well as Catholic, did not hesitate to ally themselves with foreigners of a different persuasion, in order to fight fellow-countrymen of a different persuasion. The religious wars set the German nation back centuries in its development; they almost destroyed the old Empire, except in name; they created the single independent States whose rivalry brought about struggles that filled the next two and a half centuries, until the foundation of the new German Empire. The Western and Northern Marches of Germany were lost and had to be recovered, in our times, at the point of the sword. The newly discovered world beyond the ocean was divided up among the other nations, and the German flag disappeared from the seas, and has only regained its rights within the last decades.

The ultimate national union was not achieved by peaceful settlement, but in the battle of German against German. And as the old Empire was founded by a superior tribe, so the new was founded by the strongest of the individual States. [The struggle for political unity, which began after the fall of the Carolingian Empire, was decided on the battlefield of Königgrätz in favour of the most capable and successful

## **Internal Unity Essential**

reigning family.] German history had completed a circle, as it were. In a modern form, but in the old way, the German nation has, after a thousand years, once again, and more perfectly, completed the work which it accomplished in early times, and for whose destruction it alone was to blame.

Only a nation, sound to the core, and of indestructible vitality, could achieve this. True, we Germans have taken a thousand years to create, destroy and recreate, what for centuries other nations have possessed as the firm basis of their development—a national State. If we want to advance along the paths that the founding of our Empire has opened anew to us, we must insist on the suppression of such forces as might again endanger the unity of our national life. The best powers of Germany must not, as in olden times, be dissipated in struggles of the Imperial Government against individual States, and in struggles of the individual States against each other, without any consideration for the interests of the Empire. [Disraeli, the English statesman who inaugurated Imperial policy on the other side of the Channel, placed at the head of his programme the doctrine that the welfare of a country depends on its standing in the world, and that for that very reason a great country must be as united as possible at home in order to be able to develop its might abroad.]

## CHAPTER XII

### HOME POLICY UNDER THE NEW EMPIRE

THE founding of the Empire overcame Germany's political disruption and changed our political life completely; but it was unable to change the character of the German people at the same time, or to transform our inherited political shortcomings into virtues. The German remained a separatist, even after 1871; different, and more modern, but still a separatist.

In the particularism of the single States, German separatism found its strongest but by no means its only possible expression. State separatism has impressed us most directly, because it was responsible, primarily, for the national disasters in German development during the last centuries. That is why all patriots wished to defeat it, and this desire was fulfilled by Bismarck. So far as man can tell, we need fear no serious injury to the unity of our national life from separatist efforts of individual States. But we are none the less by no means free from manifestations of the separatist spirit. This spirit after, and even at the time of, the unification of Germany, sought a new field of political activity, and found it in the struggle of political parties.

The German party system, in contradistinction to those of other nations, which are in many cases older and more firmly rooted, possesses a specifically separatist

## German Party System

character, and this is manifest in those points in which our party system differs from that of other countries. We have small parties that are sometimes formed for the sake of very narrow interests and objects, and carry on a struggle of their own which it is hardly possible to include in the affairs of a great Empire. The religious conflict in all its strength has found its way into our party system. The struggle between the various classes of society has retained almost all its vigour in the German party system, whereas in older civilised States the differences have been more and more completely adjusted by the industrial and social developments of modern times.

Our party system has inherited the dogmatism and small-mindedness, the moroseness and the spite that used to thrive in the squabbles of the German tribes and States. In other countries the party system is a national matter of home politics, and community of views with a foreigner is of no weight compared with the consciousness of belonging to the same nation as those of the opposite party at home. Abroad, the fact that the views of a political party are shared by foreigners is on occasion paraded in academic speeches at International Congresses, but it has no influence on practical politics. We Germans had strong movements in great parties, that demanded the internationalisation of party ideas, and were not convinced that the party system has national limitations. Here again is a return in modern guise of an old German abuse. Among other nations it is self-understood that the special interests of a political party must be subordinated, not only to the greatest national interests, but also to any wider

## **Imperial Germany**

interests; it is in this point above all that our parties often failed. All too seldom in the German Empire did we comply with the emphatic command: "Country before party." Not so much because the German's love of his country is less than any foreigner's, but because his love of his party is so much greater. Consequently, a momentary success, or even a momentary manifestation of power by his own party, seemed only too often to the German so tremendously important—more important than the general progress of the nation.

It cannot be said that our German party struggles are carried on with more heat than in other countries. The German's political passion rarely rises to more than an average temperature, even in times of excitement, and that, at any rate, is a good thing. Amongst other nations, especially those of Latin race, the parties, in moments of stress, fling themselves at each other with an elemental passion that not seldom leads to excesses unknown to us Germans. But these heated outbursts, which are decisive for the success or defeat of a party or group of parties, are speedily followed there by overtures of peace and reconciliation.

It is quite different here. We know nothing of the fanatic passion in excited conflicts which discharges itself like a thunder-cloud, but also, like a thunder-storm, clears the air of party politics. But we also lack the conciliatory spirit. If German parties have once opposed one another, even in matters of small political importance, it is only slowly and with difficulty that they forget and forgive each other. Occasional antagonism too often becomes lasting enmity, and, if possible, a fundamental

## Destructive Hatreds

difference in political principles is fabricated afterwards, though neither of the opposing parties was aware of it in the first instance. Very often, when discreet and well-meant attempts are made to bring about a reconciliation or agreement between parties holding strongly antagonistic convictions, this antagonism proves to have been discovered on the occasion of some quite recent party conflict, either about national questions of secondary importance, or even about a question of the power of a political party.

Anyone who stands a little outside party machinery and the party rut often fails to understand why our parties cannot unite for the settlement of essentially unimportant questions of legislation, why they fight out slight differences of opinion on details of financial, social or industrial policy with such acrimony, as if the weal and woe of the Empire depended on them. No doubt praiseworthy German conscientiousness has some small part in this, but it is not the decisive factor. What is decisive is the fact that to each individual party the hatred of other parties seems of more essential importance than the legislative matter in question, which is often only seized as a welcome opportunity to emphasise the existing differences of party politics. [Uhland makes grim Wolf von Wunnenstein refuse the thanks of old Rauschehart with the words: "I fought out of hatred of the cities and not to gain your thanks." That is a typical example of German thought and feeling.]

Immutable loyalty within the party is the cause of their quarrelsomeness. Just because the German party man clings so steadfastly and even lovingly to his

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party, he is capable of such intense hatred of other parties and has such difficulty in forgetting insults and defeats suffered at their hands. Here again in modern guise we have the old German character. As the tribes and States were firmly knit together in themselves and quarrelled with each other, so the parties to-day. Proverbial German loyalty benefits the small political associations primarily, and the great national community only secondarily. A German Government will almost always sue in vain for the abundant loyalty which is spontaneously devoted to the party cause. Even Bismarck experienced this. The man who got the better of the separatism of the States could not master the separatism of the parties. Although he had won the love and confidence of the German nation to a greater extent than anyone else, Prince Bismarck was seldom if ever successful in attempts to secure that devotion which was offered to party leaders.

Treitschke says somewhere that the hearts of the Germans have always belonged to poets and generals, not to politicians. That is quite true, if we except the party leaders. The Germans certainly forget them very soon after their death or retirement, but as long as their activity lasts they enjoy the whole-hearted loyalty and affection of all who belong to the party. Ever since we have had political parties the popular men have been party men and party leaders, and their followers supported them even in opposition to Bismarck. Right and wrong, success and failure, play an astonishingly small part in this. German loyalty to a party leader is self-sacrificing, unprejudiced and uncritical, as true loyalty which springs from love should

## Prevailing Conservatism

be. And it really makes no difference whether the party leader is successful or not, whether he looks back on victories or defeats. It has hardly ever happened in Germany that a party refused to follow its leader, even if it was plain to the meanest intelligence that he was taking them into difficulties, let alone if it appeared that the tactics of the party leaders were not in accordance with the aims and objects of the State.

It has never been particularly difficult in Germany to organise an opposition to the Government; but it was always very hard to set up a movement of opposition within a party with any success. The hope that in a struggle with the Government an opposition party might fall to pieces at the critical moment has nearly always proved deceptive. After our party system had passed through the first stage of ferment, which no young political system is spared, and had become clarified by early changes and modifications, the parties acquired remarkable solidarity. How often it has been foretold that a party would split into so-called "modern" and "old" factions. Such forecasts have hardly ever been fulfilled.

Nowhere in our political life do we find such steadfast conservatism as in our parties. Even the most radical factions are thoroughly conservative as regards the planks in their platform and their methods. This inertia of party politics goes so far that the parties still cling to their old demands even when the general development of public affairs has rendered their fulfilment absolutely impossible.

The valiant loyalty of the German to his cause and his party leader is in itself beautiful and touching,

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morally deserving of respect as is all loyalty. Politics amongst us actually show a moral quality in this matter, whereas a well-known popular saying denies all possibility of morality in politics. But if we do discuss morality in politics, the question may well be raised whether, after all, there is not a higher form of political morality. All honour to loyalty in the service of the party, loyalty to principles and to leaders; but to serve one's country is better than to serve one's party. Parties do not exist for their own sakes, but for the common weal. The highest political morality is patriotism. A sacrifice of party convictions, disloyalty even to the party programme in the interest of the Empire, is more praiseworthy than party loyalty which disregards the general welfare of the country. Less party spirit and party loyalty, and more national feeling and more public spirit are what we Germans need. [May the parties which, in the course of this war, have all given elevating proofs of their love and loyalty to their country, continue after the war to place national feeling above party feeling, and public spirit above party loyalty !]

## CHAPTER XIII

### DANGERS OF PARTY POLITICS

HAPPILY history proves that no party can permanently oppose national interests with impunity. Even the short history of German party politics furnishes instances. Liberalism, in spite of its change of attitude in national questions, has to this day not recovered from the catastrophic defeat which Prince Bismarck inflicted nearly half a century ago on the party of progress which still clung to the ideas and principles of 1848.

But epochs like that of 1866-1871, in which the soul of the nation was stirred to its depths, and judgment was pronounced so clearly and so pitilessly on political error, are as rare as they are great. The ordinary course of political development, as a rule, very slowly brings to light the results of mistaken party politics. Self-criticism and reflection must take the place of experience. It is easier for parties in other countries. In States where the parliamentary system obtains, parties are relieved of the difficult if noble task of educating themselves, the task imposed on our parties. In such countries a mistake in party politics is immediately followed by defeat and painful correction.

I do not wish hereby to advocate the parliamentary system as it is understood in the west of Europe. The worth of a Constitution does not depend on the

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way it reacts on the party system. Constitutions do not exist for parties, but for the State. Considering the peculiarities of our Government, the parliamentary system would not be a suitable form of Constitution for us.

Where the Parliamentary system proves of value, and that is by no means everywhere, the strength of the Government is based on the strength and value, on the political broad-mindedness and statesmanlike ability of the parties. There the parties formed the Constitution in the course of their own foundation and development as in England, as also in a certain sense in Republican France. In Germany the monarchical Governments are the supporters and creators of the Constitution. The parties are secondary formations, which could only grow in the soil of an existing State. We lack the preliminary conditions, both natural and historical, for a parliamentary system.

But the knowledge of this need not prevent us from seeing the advantages which this system gives to other States. Just as there is no absolutely perfect Constitution, so there is no absolutely defective one. The oft-repeated attempts, especially in France, to combine all the advantages of all possible Constitutions have hitherto always failed. While we realise this we need not shut our eyes to many advantages of Constitutions abroad.

In countries ruled by Parliament, the great parties and groups of parties acquire their political education by having to govern. When a party has gained a majority, and has provided the leading statesmen from its ranks, it has the opportunity of putting its politi-

## Party Responsibilities

cal opinions into practice. [Thus it has the opportunity of convincing itself of the relativity of party programmes, party aspirations and party opinions.] If it pursues a theoretical or extreme course, if it sacrifices the common weal to party interests and party principles, if it has the folly to want to carry out its party programme undiluted and in full, it will lose its majority at the next elections and will be driven from office by the opposition. The party that must govern is responsible, not only for its own welfare, but in a higher degree for that of the nation and the State. Party interests and national interests coincide. But as it is not possible to govern a State for long in a one-sided fashion in accordance with some party programme, the party in office will moderate its demands in order not to lose its paramount influence over the country. The parties in a country governed by Parliament possess a salutary corrective that we lack, in the prospect of having to rule themselves, and the necessity of being able to do so.

In States not governed by Parliament the parties feel that their primary vocation is to criticise. They feel no obligation worth mentioning, to moderate their demands, or any great responsibility for the conduct of public affairs. As they never have to prove the practical value of their opinions *urbi et orbi*, they mostly content themselves with manifesting the immutability of their convictions. "A great deal of conviction, and very little feeling of responsibility." That is how a witty journalist once described our German party system to me, and he added: "Our parties do not feel as if they were the actors who perform in the play,

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but as if they were the critics who look on. They award praise and blame, but they do not feel as if they themselves participated in what goes on. The chief thing is to supply the voters at home with a strong and, if possible, welcome opinion."

Once, during the Boer War, standing in the lobby of the Reichstag, I remonstrated with one of the members on account of his attacks on England, which did not exactly tend to make our difficult position any easier. The worthy man replied in a tone of conviction: "It is my right and my duty, as a member of the Reichstag, to express the feelings of the German nation. You, as Minister, will, I hope, take care that my feelings do no mischief abroad." I do not think that such a remark, the *naïveté* of which disarmed me, would have been possible in any other country.

There is nothing to be said against expressions of feeling in politics, so long as they stop short of injuring the interests of the State. They belong to the class of imponderables in political life, that men like Bismarck valued highly. Particularly in Germany, the feelings of the people have often acted as a wholesome corrective to preconceived political opinions. In foreign politics, feelings, sympathies and antipathies are unreliable sign-posts, and we should not have gone very far if our leading statesmen had consulted their hearts rather than their heads in shaping the course of foreign relations.

In the field of home politics it is a different thing, especially for us Germans. One is tempted to wish that in that case political feelings and sentiments had more

## A Tender-Hearted People

than their actual influence, and political intelligence less. For the effect of German political intelligence is not to moderate the desires of party politics, nor to adapt their political demands to existing circumstances. Our political intelligence urges us to systematise and schematise the realities of political life; not to adjust things in a sensible way to the existing political facts and conditions, but to arrange these in a logically correct sequence of thought.

We Germans are, on the one hand, a sentimental, tender-hearted people, and are prone always, perhaps too much so, to follow the dictates of our heart against our better judgment. But, on the other hand, our passion for logic amounts to fanaticism, and wherever an intellectual formula or a system has been found for anything, we insist with obstinate perseverance on fitting realities into the system.

The individual German shows both these sides of his nature in private life, the nation shows them in public life, and many a curious phenomenon in the present, as in the past, may be explained by this duality of character. We like to consider foreign politics, which are connected with a long series of painful and pleasurable national events, from the emotional standpoint. Transactions in home politics, which the nation grasped clearly in a comparatively short space of time, have become a recognised field for intellectual theories, for systematic examination and classification.

A German rarely applies the methods of modern science to politics, he mostly employs those of the old speculative philosophers. He does not attach importance to confronting Nature with open eyes and to

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observing what has happened, what is happening, and therefore what can and necessarily will happen again in the future. Rather, he grows intent upon finding out how things ought to have developed, and what they ought to have been like, for everything to harmonise with nice logic and for the system to come into its own. Their programmes are not adapted to reality; reality is to adjust itself to the programmes, and, what is more, not only in single instances, but altogether. Most of the German party programmes, if you consider them with an eye to their logic and systematic perfection, are extremely praiseworthy and redound to the credit of German thoroughness and logical conscientiousness. But, judged by the standard of practicability, not one will pass muster.

Politics are life, and, like all life, will adhere to no rule. Modern politics are conditioned by events far back in our history, where the primary causes, whose effects we still feel, are lost in a mist of conjectures. But political practice would gain nothing by a complete knowledge of all causes and limitations. We should learn only how a multitude of things have come about, but not what must be done to-day or to-morrow. Nearly every day brings new facts and new problems which require new decisions, just as in the lives of individual men. Nor does the labour demanded by the day and by the hour see the end of our task. We must, as far as lies in the power of our understanding and ability, take thought for the future. Of what assistance, then, are the regulations of a programme drawn up at a certain moment, however uniform and logical it be?

## Party Programmes

The varied life of a nation, ever changing, ever growing more complicated, cannot be stretched or squeezed to fit a programme or a political principle. Of course, the parties must draw up in the form of a programme the demands and ideas they represent, so as to make it clear to the country, especially at election time, what are their aims and principles. Without a programme, a party would be an unknown quantity. But when a programme, drawn up to serve the immediate and future aims of party politics, is petrified into a system for all politics in general, it becomes objectionable.

There are many and often conflicting interests among the people, and the representatives of like interests are quite right to band themselves together and formulate their demands. The formula is the programme. There are different opinions about State, Law and Society, about the regulation of public life, especially in respect of the distribution of political rights between the people and the Government. Those, also, who represent similar views will join together and express their opinions in a few distinctive propositions. These propositions constitute the programme. The connection between industrial life and political life often causes the representatives of like interests to hold like political opinions. Their programme will be proportionately more comprehensive. It may also be admitted that the two concrete, historical views of State and Society—the Conservative and the Liberal—and the two abstract, dogmatic views—the Ultramontane and the Social-Democratic—embrace a large number of the facts of political life. The respective party pro-

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grammes can therefore go into detail accordingly. But here, too, there is a limit. A large number of events in public life cannot be included even in these comparatively comprehensive programmes, nor can Conservatives and Liberals hold absolutely opposed views with respect to them.

On the whole, there is a preponderance of such legislative problems as deal with questions of pure utility, which must be solved by political common sense, and cannot be weighed in the scales of general party views. But such disregard of party programmes is rarely conceded, even to the details of legislation. It does not suffice us Germans to confine our party politics to a certain number of practical demands and political opinions. Each party would like to imbue politics as a whole with its views, even down to the smallest detail. And this is not limited to politics. The parties would like to be distinguished from one another even in their grasp of intellectual and their conception of practical life. Party views are to become a "*Weltanschauung*" (Conception of the Universe). Herein they over-estimate political and under-estimate intellectual life.

The German nation in particular has been more deeply and seriously moved by the great problems of a conception of the Universe than any other nation. It has often, probably too often for its practical interests, subordinated dry questions of policy to the battle about the conception of the Universe. On the other hand, it was the first nation to set intellectual life free from political tutelage. If now it subordinates this conception to party politics, if it wants to go so far

## “Conception of the Universe”

as to see every event in the world and in life in the dismal light of political party principles, it will be false to itself. The attempt to widen the scope of politics, and especially party politics, in this way must lead to an intellectual decline, and has perhaps already done so. A political conception of the Universe is nonsense, for luckily the world is not everywhere political. And a conception of the Universe founded on party politics cannot even span the political world, because there are far too many matters and questions in politics that lie outside the sphere of party platforms and party principles.

An English friend once said to me that it struck him how often the word “*Weltanschauung*” (Conception of the Universe) occurred in the German parliamentary speeches. Over and over again he found, “From the point of view of my conception of the Universe, I cannot approve of this, and I must demand that.” He asked me to explain to him what German party politicians meant by “*Weltanschauung*,” and then remarked, as he shook his head, that English politicians and members of Parliament did not know much about such things. They had different opinions and represented different interests, pursued different objects; but they only argued on practical grounds and rarely touched on such high matters as the conception of the Universe.

When we try to make of party principles a system by which to judge all political and non-political life, we harm ourselves politically and intellectually. Politically, we only intensify the differences which in any case we feel particularly keenly, because we attribute a special intellectual value to them, and we reduce

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more and more the number of those tasks in public life which really can be carried out much better without the bias of party politics. But if we drag questions of intellectual life into the realm of party politics, that will mean the loss of that intellectual versatility and magnanimity which have won for German culture the first place in the civilised world.

In Germany a politician or a statesman is very quickly reproached with lack of principle if, under pressure of shifting conditions, he changes an opinion he used to hold, or approves of the views of more than one party. But development takes place without reference to party platforms or principles. If forced to choose between sacrificing an opinion and doing a foolish thing, the practical man will prefer the former alternative. At any rate, no Minister, who is responsible to the nation for his decisions, can afford to indulge in the luxury of a preconceived opinion, when it is a question of fulfilling a legitimate demand of the times. And if, then, it is pointed out that there is a contradiction between his present view and his earlier expressions of opinion, I can only advise him to protect himself against the reproach of being inconsistent, a turncoat, a weathercock, and whatever the other catchwords of vulgar polemics may be, by acquiring a thick skin, which is in any case a useful thing to have in modern public life.

It is a fact confirmed by all experience that the true interests of the nation have never been found in the course of one particular party alone. They always lie midway between the courses pursued by various parties. We must draw the diagonal of the parallelogram of

## Lack of Political Principles

forces. It will sometimes tend more in the direction of one party and sometimes in that of another. A Minister, whatever party he may incline to personally, must try to find a compromise between all the legitimate demands made by the various parties. In the course of a fairly long term of office, little by little, and as his tasks vary, he will, of course, be attacked by all parties. But that does not matter so long as the State prospers.

I never took the reproach of lack of political principle tragically; I have even, at times, felt it to savour of praise, for I saw in it appreciation of the fact that I was guided by reasons of State. The political principles which a Minister has to live up to are very different in character from the principles recognised by a party man; they belong to the sphere of State policy, not of party politics. A Minister must be loyal to the general interests of the State and of the people which are entrusted to his care, and this without considering party platforms, and, if necessary, in opposition to all parties, even to that with which the majority of his political views are in accordance.

In a Minister, firm principles and impartiality are not only compatible, they are interdependent. Bismarck was a man of iron principles, and by being true to them he led our country to unity, glory and greatness. As a Member of Parliament he was a party man, and as Minister he was reproached by his party for a political change of front. He was accused ten years later of again changing his opinions. As a matter of fact, he never swerved from the path which led to his goal, for his goal was nothing less than to secure prosperity and every possible advantage for the

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German nation and the Empire. This goal could not be attained on party lines, for the interests of the community in general seldom, if ever, coincide with those of a single party.

Universally applicable rules for the best possible policy cannot well be drawn up. Political ends and political means vary with circumstances, and one must not slavishly imitate any model, not even the greatest. In as far as varied and chequered life can be summed up in a formula, for politics it would run as follows : Fanatical where the welfare and interests of the country and where reasons of State are in question, idealistic in aim, realistic in political practice, sceptical, as far as men, their trustworthiness and gratitude are concerned.

## CHAPTER XIV

### POLITICAL AIMS AND DISCORDS

I HAVE never concealed the fact, even from Liberals, that in many great questions of politics I share the views of the Conservatives. In the same way I have never denied the fact that I am not a Conservative party man. As a responsible Minister I could not be that, given the character of my office and our German conditions. I discuss here what my personal reasons are for not being a party man, although I consider myself a Conservative in all essentials, because the consideration of these reasons leads to concrete questions of German politics at the present time and in the immediate past.

There is a distinct difference between State Conservatism that the Government can pursue and party Conservatism that no Government in Germany can adhere to without falling into a state of partisanship which, in all circumstances, must prove fatal. In other words: The policy of the Government can go hand in hand with the policy of the Conservatives, so long as the latter is in accordance with the true interests of the State. That was frequently the case, and will often be the case in the future. But the ways of the Government and the Conservatives must diverge, if the policy of the party is not in accordance with the interests of the community which the Government must

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protect. At the same time, the Government can be more conservative towards the party than the party towards the Government. More conservative in the sense that it fulfils more perfectly the special task of upholding the State. In such situations Prince Bismarck, too, who was a Conservative consciously and by conviction, came into bitter conflict with his former party friends. It is well known that he dealt in detail with this very point, both in his "Gedanken und Erinnerungen" ("Reflections and Reminiscences") and in the conversations which Poschinger has transmitted to us.

The task of Conservative policy was once aptly defined by Count Posadowsky in the following way: That Conservatives must maintain the State in such a way that the people are content in it. Such a maintenance of the State is often unimaginable without the alteration of existing institutions. The State must adjust itself to the requirements of modern conditions of life in order to remain habitable and consequently vigorous.

It would be very unjust to deny that the Conservative party has often assisted in introducing innovations; sometimes, indeed, with a better grace than those parties which have "Progress" inscribed on their banner. This was the case in the year 1878, when industrial conditions necessitated the great revolution in tariffs and industrial policy. Again, at the inauguration of the social policy which took into account the changed conditions of the labouring classes. [It was Herr Heydebrand too, the Conservative leader, who was the first party leader during this war to express himself

## The Conservative Party

in a conciliatory fashion, uttering the following wise words :

"It would be a tremendous gain if, in consequence of this struggle, many of the grudges we bore each other in the past should finally disappear. No doubt economic, social and professional antagonism will remain, but we can and must alter our attitude to one another. Many a thing that we had thought impossible has now been recognised as an essential truth, and after this baptism of blood and fire, even when we criticise or blame, we must realise that our relations to one another are changed. We shall never forget that our opponent once helped to defend the German Fatherland. That alone must be a blessing for our German nation."]

Owing to the intensification of economic differences, the Conservative party, like all others, has, in a certain sense, come to represent special interests. I will not discuss the point whether this was the case to such an extent as to be bad for the party. But no one who has sat on the Ministerial Bench during the last decades will be prepared to deny that now and then it was true - to a greater extent than was favourable to the course of the Government's affairs.

[I had to oppose the Conservative party, as in the past I had opposed others, when I was convinced that its standpoint was irreconcilable with the interests of the community in general.] In the fight over the Tariff the interests of the nation in general were identical with those of the Conservative party; but in the reform of the Imperial finances they were not. The subsequent development in both cases proved this to be true.

## **Imperial Germany**

Nothing in the fundamental views of the Conservative party in respect of the organisation of society, industries and, above all, of the State ever separated me from it in the days of which I am speaking, nor does it do so to-day.

We must never fail to appreciate what the Conservative element has achieved for the political life of Prussia and Germany. It would be a sad loss to the nation if Conservative views ceased to be a living and effective force among the Germans, and if the party ceased to occupy a position in parliamentary and political life which is worthy of its past. The forces which animate the Conservative party are those which made Prussia and Germany great, and which our country must preserve in order to remain great and grow greater; they are forces which never become out of date. We Germans must not lose the ideals of the best Conservatism: manly loyalty without servility to the King and the reigning family, and tenacious attachment to home and country.

If, nowadays, the opponents of the Conservative party are not content to fight them on the ground of party differences, but manifest class-hatred, always so objectionable in political life, against those classes of the nation which are chiefly represented in the Conservative party, we must not forget what those very classes did in the service of Prussia and Germany. It was the "Junker" and peasants east of the Elbe who, under the Hohenzollern princes, primarily achieved greatness for Brandenburg-Prussia. The throne of the Prussian Kings is cemented with the blood of the Prussian nobility. The Great King (Frederick the

## The Junker

Great) expressed emphatically more than once what he owed to his Junkers.

The praise which the Prussian nobility demand, and which they have a perfect right to expect, is not meant to detract from the achievements and merits of other classes. Without the self-sacrificing loyalty of the middle classes, the peasants and the poor people, the nobility would have accomplished little. It is quite true, too, that the nobles were able to distinguish themselves particularly in earlier times, because the conditions at that period gave them exceptional opportunities. But it was when they occupied posts of responsibility and danger in the service of the Prussian State that they achieved most—more than the aristocracy of any other modern State. Nothing but injustice can fail to recognise this. [And those who live now know in what full measure the Prussian aristocracy has borne its share in this war, rendering the highest military services and shedding their blood for the country.]

It is altogether preposterous, nowadays, still to contrast the Junker and the bourgeoisie as separate castes. Professional and social life have so fused the old classes that they can no longer be distinguished from each other.

But if one appreciates at its true value the efficiency of the old classes in the past, one must be just and concede the merits of each. The Prussian nobles have a right to be proud of their past. If they keep the sentiments of their ancestors, who made Prussia great, alive in the ideals of the Conservative party, they deserve thanks for so doing. And it must not be

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forgotten that such old Prussian sentiments guided the policy of the Conservative party in the most difficult times of our old Emperor and his great Minister, in the years of conflict. So far as one can speak of a right to gratitude in politics—and one ought to be able to do so—we owe the Conservatives a debt of gratitude for the support they afforded Bismarck in the year 1862. I lay particular stress on this, because at the time my official career was nearing its close I was forced to oppose the Conservative party. I should like to make a clear distinction between my general attitude towards Conservative views, my sentiments towards the Conservative party, and my opinion of individual phases of Conservative party politics.

Even a man who esteems the fundamental views of the Conservatives as highly as I do, who, like me, hopes that sound Conservative thought will have a far-reaching influence on legislation, and who has often furthered such influence, must be of opinion that disastrous consequences will result from the fact that in 1909 the bridges between the Right and Left were broken down. [The really fruitful periods of our home policy were those when the Conservatives and Liberals were not fundamentally hostile to one another, but tried to modify their respective political demands so as to avoid a complete break.] In saying this I refer, not only to the time of the so-called "Block Policy," but also to earlier, well-known and significant phases of Bismarck's time.

Conservatism and Liberalism are not only both justified, but are both necessary for our political life.

## Liberalism

How difficult it is to rule in our country is made clear by the facts that one cannot rule in Prussia for any length of time without the support of the Conservatives, nor in the Empire without that of the Liberals. Neither must Liberal ideas disappear from us as a people. Moreover, the formation of strong Liberal parties is indispensable to us. If Conservatism is rooted in the administrative talent of the old Prussians, Liberalism is rooted in the intellectual peculiarities of the German nation. Its best ideals, too, are of permanent value. We Germans do not want to be deprived of the lusty defence of individual freedom against State coercion, and this Liberalism has always represented.

Liberalism, too, has earned its historic rights and its right to gratitude. It was the Liberals who first expressed the idea of German Unity, and spread it through the people. They carried out the indispensable preliminary work. The goal could not be reached by the course which they followed. Then Conservative policy had to step in, in order, as Bismarck expressed it, to realise the Liberal idea by means of a Conservative action. The German Empire itself may well be regarded as the first, the greatest, and the most successful piece of work accomplished by the co-operation of the Conservatives and Liberals.

Before the war it was customary in both camps to look upon Conservatism and Liberalism as two fundamentally opposed conceptions of the State, and to assert that each lives on its antagonism to the other. That does not, however, correctly interpret the relationship between German Conservatives and Liberals. If it were true, the two parties, and the groups which are

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attached to them, would have to gain in strength the stronger became the contrast between them, and the more hostile the attitude they adopted towards each other.

But the exact opposite is the case. With the exception of a few extraordinary situations, the Conservatives and Liberals have been strongest as parties and most influential in Parliament when they co-operated. [The co-operation of the Conservatives and Liberals in the principal ballots and the second ballots resulted in the victory gained in January, 1907, over Social Democracy. The fact that the Social Democratic seats at that time were reduced, and could be reduced, from 81 to 43, was not merely significant for this single electoral campaign, but was of far more general importance. A comparison between the results of the elections in 1907 and in 1912 clearly proves this. Conservatives and Liberals, when they joined forces, defeated Social Democracy, but acting independently they were beaten by the latter.]

Of the 69 constituencies which the Social Democrats gained in the January elections of 1912, no fewer than 66 had returned Conservatives or Liberals in 1907; 29 had fallen to the share of the Conservatives and their neighbours, and 37 to the Liberal parties. The elections of 1907 inflicted the severest loss that the Social Democrats had experienced since the founding of the Reichstag; the elections of 1912 brought them the greatest gain. The parties of the Right fell from 113 seats that they had won in 1907 to 69 in 1912. That is the smallest number of members of the Right since the year 1874. The number of Liberals in the

## The Centre

Reichstag after the elections of 1912 was lower than ever before. At the elections of 1907, for the first time, Conservatives and Liberals of all shades of opinion were united for one cause. The elections of 1912 saw for the first time a close coalition of all the parties of the Left. In 1907 the Right emerged from the elections as the strongest group, numbering 113 members as against 106 Liberals, 105 representatives of the Centre, and 43 Socialists. In the year 1912 the Social Democrats became the strongest party in the Reichstag, with 110 members, while there were 90 representatives of the Centre, 85 Liberals, and 69 Conservatives of all shades of opinion.

No doubt we must not expect all political salvation, or the solution of all legislative problems, to result from co-operation between Conservatives and Liberals. It will happen again and again that their ways part as regards individual, and also important, questions. For the antagonism exists, and rightly so. It would also be quite wrong to credit the co-operation of Conservatives and Liberals with all great achievements in the sphere of home politics. The Centre played a distinguished and often a decisive part in our social legislation, in many of our Armament Bills, and, above all, in granting us the navy. But strife between the Conservatives and the Liberals has always been disastrous—for the two parties themselves, for the course of our home policy, and, last but not least, for the temper of the nation.

The antagonism between Liberals and Conservatives will never disappear. It has an historical and a practical significance. This friction is a part of our

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political life. But the antagonism in their views should not be exaggerated unnecessarily, nor made to involve such great matters as utterly irreconcilable conceptions of the Universe. In so doing one departs from sober political reality. Even religious antagonism, which has been amongst us for four centuries, and which the nation, in accordance with its disposition, has always taken very seriously, makes way for the demands of the moment.

In Socialism we really have a series of ideas, so different from our homely conceptions of Law and Custom, Religion, Society and State that it may indeed be termed a different conception of the Universe. I myself, in this connection, once spoke of a difference in the conception of the Universe.

No one seriously believes, however, that a middle-class Liberal differs from a middle-class Conservative in his conception of the Universe. They have too many common ideas and ideals, especially in national matters, and the wide kingdom of German intellectual life in Science and in Art belongs to them both. How many Liberals there are who incline to individual Conservative views ! How many Conservatives who are by no means opposed to all Liberal ideas and demands ! All these people do not consider themselves politically neutral, nor are they.

And what about the Ministers ? The party papers quarrel at regular intervals whether this particular Minister or that is to be considered as a Conservative or as a Liberal, and as a rule each party tries to foist the majority of Ministers on to the opposing party. The fact is that, if asked to state precisely to

## Ministers Above Party

which party platform they give their support, most Ministers would be at a loss.

It is not only unjustifiable, but also unpractical, to emphasise unduly the differences between the parties. [It is a bad habit of the Germans, and one of long standing, in cases of differences on the subject of home politics to exaggerate quite unduly, and to treat individual, political or economic questions as if the weal or woe of the country depended on them, whereas the matter in question can often be decided in either way without doing any appreciable harm. Much would be gained if in future, in home politics, old Thiers' saying were taken to heart: "*Donner à chaque chose sa juste valeur.*"<sup>1]</sup>] They do not, as a rule, go hand in hand for any length of time, and the bonds that unite them are anything but permanent. So if they break with their friends of yesterday, and become reconciled to their enemies of yesterday, they are placed in the awkward position of having to break down the carefully constructed fabric of fundamental party differences, with as much trouble as they expended in building it up. This has happened just about as often as the composition of the majority changed.

If party differences really went so deep, and permeated so completely every detail of political life as is represented in party quarrels, then, considering the number of our parties, none of which has hitherto obtained an absolute majority, it would be impossible to accomplish any legislative work.

But, as a matter of fact, much valuable work of different kinds has been done in almost every depart-

<sup>1</sup> Estimate each thing at its proper value.

## Imperial Germany

ment of home politics during the last decades. One after the other, the parties have placed themselves at each other's disposal, and have often, with astounding suddenness, overcome the differences they emphasised so strongly before. No doubt other differences are emphasised all the more strongly. And this only lasts until the formation of a new majority, so that really there is no occasion to take the antagonism between the parties so tragically.

The Government must also look upon party antagonism as a variable quantity. Not only as a quantity variable in itself, but as one whose variability can and must be influenced, if the interests of the Empire and the State demand it. It is not sufficient to take majorities wherever they are to be found and as occasion offers. The Government must try to create majorities for its tasks.

To govern with a majority which varies in each case is no doubt advantageous and convenient, but there are great dangers attached to it. It is certainly not a panacea for all political situations.

Bismarck is usually cited as having taken his majorities where he could get them. But in this, as in most references to the time of Bismarck, the point is missing—Bismarck himself at the head of the Government. He held the reins of government with such an iron grip that he never ran any risk of letting the least scrap of power slip into the hands of Parliament through the influence he conceded to a majority, when he happened to find one at his disposal. Above all, he never dreamt of considering the wishes of a majority unless they tallied with his own. He made use of

## Bismarck's Way

existing majorities, but he never let them make use of him. Bismarck in particular excelled in ridding himself of antagonistic majorities and in procuring such as would acquiesce in the aims of his policy. If his choice lay between allowing an important law to be blocked or mangled by an existing majority and engaging in a troublesome fight to effect a change of majority, he never hesitated to choose the latter. He profited by the possibility of getting casual majorities, but he was the last to yield to them when he had got them.

In this respect Bismarck's name should not be idly cited. His rule can only serve as a precedent for a strong, determined and even ruthless Government, not for an accommodating and yielding one that concedes greater rights to the parties than they are entitled to claim. [Prince Bismarck, who as Imperial Chancellor more than once characterised fear of responsibility as the malady of the statesmen of our time, said in the 'nineties to Hermann Hofmann, the chief editor of the *Hamburger Nachrichten*, "No Government is so injurious to the interests of a country as a weak one."]

It is certainly less trouble to look on and see how a majority can be got together for a Bill, than to see that the Bill is passed in the way the Government thinks proper and profitable. The method of, so to speak, offering a Bill in the open market and making a compact with the highest bidder will only do when a Government is as strong, and at the same time as clever, as that of Bismarck's. Above all, this can only be done when the Bill itself is accepted by the majority in the form which the Government have proposed and which they desire,

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i.e. when the lead is kept in the hands of the Government.

If the Government allows itself to be led, then it may easily happen that, what with the feuds of the parties and the haggling between the sections which make up the majority, the Bill will become unrecognisable and something quite different will result—at times even just the contrary to what the Government wanted. In this way the majorities are not put at the disposal of the Bills that the Government introduces as opportunity affords, but the Government give their Bills up to the majorities to pass and amend as they think best. While the Government pretends to be above the parties, in reality it slips under their heel.

The very necessity for changing the majorities, in view of the state of the parties in Germany, demands a strong hand to direct the affairs of the Government. No Government can work for ever with one and the same majority. That is rendered impossible by the relations which the parties bear to one another, by the dogmatism of most parties, by their tendency to go over to the opposition from time to time in order to gain popularity, and, finally, by the manifold nature of the Government's tasks, which can only in part be accomplished by one particular majority.

In the interests of a policy which as far as possible does justice to all sections of the nation, it is not desirable that any one of the parties, with whose assistance positive work for the good of the State can be done, should never co-operate. It is good for the parties if they have a share in legislative work. Parties which always preserve an attitude of opposition and negation,

## The Ultra-Liberals

and are left alone by the Government, become fossilised in the items of their programmes, and, if they do not die out altogether, at best deprive our public life of valuable forces. In the course of the last decades the Left Wing of our Liberalism had fallen into this condition, even with regard to vital questions of national importance. The problem of enrolling Ultra-Liberalism in positive co-operation, especially in military and Colonial matters, had to be tackled. It was solved by the "Block Policy," and this solution not only proved satisfactory during the existence of the Block, but lasted longer, for shortly before the outbreak of the world war the Ultra-Liberals helped to procure a very substantial increase in the army.

The formation of the group of parties which goes by the somewhat unfortunate name of the "Block," a term borrowed from French politicians, was an event of extraordinary and typical significance, and was most enlightening. [If I hark back to these events here, it is not that I wish to recall former differences of opinion at a time when the nation shows a united front to its enemies.] Nor do I mean to recommend the Block as a panacea for any and every contingency in home politics. I was always well aware that such a combination must be of limited duration, because, for one thing, it never entered my calculations that the Centre would permanently be excluded.

The Centre is the strong bastion built by the Roman Catholic section of the people to protect itself from interference on the part of the Protestant majority. The previous history of the Centre may be traced back to the times when in the old Empire the *Corpus Evangelic-*

## Imperial Germany

*orum* was opposed by the *Corpus Catholicorum*. But whereas in the old Empire Catholicism and Protestantism were more or less evenly balanced, in the new Empire the Catholics are in the minority; the old Catholic Empire has been succeeded by the new Protestant one. [Of course by this I do not intend to convey that the rule of the House of Hohenzollern is of a denominational character; I merely wish to point out that in the old Empire all those who successively wore the Imperial crown, and more especially the family of the Habsburgs, which for more than five hundred years wore the crown of the Holy Roman Empire, belonged to the Catholic Church, that in the new Empire the family of the Hohenzollern are members of the Evangelical Church, and that after the foundation of the new Empire this fact disquieted the Catholic section of the German people.

The Hohenzollern are the first great reigning family in Europe who have taken the principle of equal religious rights seriously, and the more they have shown that it is foreign to their character to favour one particular form of religion, and the longer they fulfil their high office in a spirit of true justice and tolerance, the more surely will the fears of the Catholic minority vanish.] It must, however, be admitted that this minority has a great advantage over the Protestant majority in its unity and solidarity.

Good Protestant as I am, I do not deny that, though the Protestants often have reason to complain of lack of perception on the part of the Catholics, yet, on the other hand, in Protestant circles there is often a lack of toleration toward the Catholics.

## Religion in the War

My old Commander, later General Field-Marshal Freiherr von Loë, a good Prussian and a good Catholic, once said to me that in this respect matters would not improve until the well-known principle of French law, "*que la recherche de la paternité était interdite*," were changed for us into "*la recherche de la confession était interdite*." He also replied to this effect to a foreign princess, who asked what was the percentage of Protestant and Catholic officers in his army corps: "I know how many battalions, squadrons and batteries I command, but I take no interest in what church my officers belong to." That is what they think in the army, and in the diplomatic service, and this manner of thinking must hold in other positions as well.

Members of both religions would do well to take to heart the beautiful words of Görres: "All of us, Catholics and Protestants, have sinned in our fathers, and still weave the tissue of human error in one way or another. No one has the right to set himself above another in his pride, and God will tolerate it in none, least of all in those who call themselves His friends."

[In this war Catholics and Protestants have vied with each other in heroism and self-sacrifice, in full and equal devotion to their Fatherland. As the Evangelical, so did the Catholic charitable organisations come forward in all their greatness. The deaconesses as well as the Gray sisters have performed prodigies of heroism in their quiet way. A great number of priests belonging to various orders, among them several Jesuits, have received the highest military decoration for their conduct on the field. In spite of attacks from Catholic camps abroad, our Catholic compatriots work for the

## Imperial Germany

German cause in a positively exemplary fashion. And the allocations of Benedict XV., inspired as they are with the spirit of true Christianity and filled with wisdom, have been received on all sides in Germany with equal gratitude.

Every patriot must hope and desire that in future times of peace, religious antagonism will remain as inconspicuous as it is to-day in time of war. That will be all the easier, if complete undenominationalism obtains in our intellectual as well as in our public life.]

The feeling of being slighted, which still exists in many Catholic circles, can only be overcome by an absolutely undenominational policy, a policy in which, as I once expressed it in the Chamber of Deputies, there is neither a Protestant nor a Catholic Germany, but only the one indivisible nation, indivisible in material as in spiritual matters.

On the other hand, however, there are many weighty reasons why a religious party should not wield such an extraordinary and decisive influence in politics as was the case for many years in this country. The Centre is a party held together by religious views, and is the representative of the religious minority. As such its existence is justified; but it must not arrogate to itself a predominant position in politics. Every party which, owing to the constitution of the majority and to its own strength, occupies an exceptionally strong position in Parliament is inclined to abuse its power. The Ultra-Liberals did so in the years of struggle; the National Liberals in the first half of the 'seventies; the Conservatives in the Prussian Chamber of Deputies, when they thwarted the well-thought-out and far-reaching

## A Coalition

plans for the canal; and finally the Centre did so. All my predecessors in office were from time to time placed in the position of having to defend themselves against the Centre's claims to power. Many of the conflicts in home politics during the last decades had their origin in the necessity the Governments were under to defend themselves; the conflict of 1887, that of 1893, and, finally, the collision of 1906.

For a party which is in an almost impregnable position, such as the Centre occupies, the temptation to pursue a policy of power pure and simple was very great. It was doubly tempting if the Centre was in a position to form a majority together with the Social Democrats, and with their help could prevent the passing of any and every Bill. A majority composed of the Centre and the Social Democrats, which resisted justifiable and necessary demands, was not only injurious to our national life, but constituted a serious danger.

Before 1906 the Centre allowed itself to be tempted to turn to its own advantage the systematic opposition of the Social Democrats towards national demands, if together with these it could obtain a majority, and if it fitted in with its policy of power to discomfit the Government by the rejection of such demands. In the same way, before the storm which cleared the air in 1906, it happened more than once that the Centre laid down difficult or even impossible conditions, before giving its consent to national demands, knowing full well that without its help it was impossible to get a national majority. From the defeat of the Cartel at the February elections of 1890 up to the Block elections

## Imperial Germany

of 1907, after which the Centre did not oppose any Army, Navy, or Colonial Bills, the Government lived uninterruptedly under the shadow of a threat of union between the Centre and the Social Democrats, to form an Opposition majority. In the seventeen years between the Cartel and the Block, the Centre certainly rendered valuable services in furthering national affairs, especially in respect of the Navy Bills, the Tariff Bills, and in a notable manner in the development of social policy. But events in the sphere of colonial politics in the winter of 1906 proved that the Centre, [overstraining its factional claim to power, thought at that time that, with the help of Social Democracy, it could bring undue pressure to bear on the Government.]

It was necessary to settle the conflict conjured up by the Centre, not only for the time being, but with an eye to the past and the future. The need of forming a majority for national questions without the Centre had really existed since the split in the Bismarckian Cartel, and was created by the conclusions that the Centre had drawn from the fact that its assistance was indispensable for the furtherance of national affairs.

It was, then, an old problem that was set for solution in 1907, one that was made urgent by the divisions of the preceding months, but that was not originally raised by them. Not a majority against the Centre, nor a majority from which the Centre was to be excluded, but a majority powerful and strong enough in itself to do justice to national exigencies, if need be without the help of the Centre. If this were achieved the Centre could no more harbour the seductive idea that it was

## The Block Elections

indispensable, and the danger of a majority formed by the Centre and the Social Democrats would no longer be acute.

When the People's party voted with the Conservatives and National Liberals for the Colonial Bills, I perceived the possibility of forming a new majority. I should have seized this opportunity, even if I had not been convinced that it was possible to smooth away the differences between the Conservatives and Liberals, and that the co-operation of these two parties would have great educative value. In pursuing this course I did my duty. The Block majority was formed not against the Centre as such, but against the Centre allied in opposition with the Social Democrats.

The nation looked upon the Block elections as a purely national matter. The temper of the people, when success was assured, was not such as would be roused by a triumph in party politics, but as would emanate from a feeling of patriotic satisfaction. The Block had been matured by the experience of nearly two decades of home policy. There was promise for the coming decade in the fact that the last of the middle-class parties had been won over [to the side of the Government in the great tasks of the Empire. And thus the Block policy was an important and indispensable stage in the long and mostly difficult fight that the Government had to wage with the German parties in order to secure the victory of national ideas.]

The underlying idea of the so-called Block was similar to that which was at the foundation of the Cartel. I might almost say: the Block was the modern realisation of an old idea adapted to the changed cir-

## Imperial Germany

cumstances of the times. For a long time it had not been feasible to repeat the Cartel formed by Conservatives and National Liberals. The old parties of the Cartel had been ground small between the millstones of the Centre and the Social Democrats.

In order to be able, if need be, to dispense with the help of the Centre in forming a national majority, it was necessary to include Ultra-Liberalism. When in 1906 the Ultra-Liberals offered to co-operate in national work, the Government had to seize the helping hand held out to them—and hold it fast. It was not so much a question of winning over a party to the Government side, as of extending the sphere of the national idea among the people. For the first time since the founding of the Empire, the old Ultra-Liberalism [took its stand unconditionally upon the ground of our colonial policy, our policy of armaments and our world policy.]

The way in which [Ultra-Liberalism supported the Government proposals] hardly left a doubt that the change was intended to be permanent rather than temporary. What Eugen Richter had prophesied to me, not long before he retired from political life, had come true. With sure instinct, all classes of the nation felt and understood the real significance of this turn of affairs in 1906, till later on the fads of party programmes obscured the clear facts, as they have so often done.

Since 1907 the Ultra-Liberals have [supported all Armament Bills.] The small Army and Navy Bills of the spring of 1912 were accepted by them in the same way as were the great increase in the Army in the summer of 1913, and the demands of colonial policy. To estimate the value of the assistance of the Ultra-

## The Political Balance

Liberals, it is not sufficient to consider whether the Armament Bills would have had a majority in the Reichstag without them. The advantage lies in this, that whereas formerly a majority of middle-class parties stood security for the national needs of the Empire, a majority which was mostly got together with great difficulty, now all the middle-class parties are opposed to the Social Democrats and the Nationalistic parties and fragments of parties.

## CHAPTER XV

### ARMAMENTS AND THE REICHSTAG

THE national questions of the Empire have ceased to be a subject of anxiety in home politics. And the solid force with which the national idea finds expression in all sections of the middle classes, when the defence of the Empire is concerned, must be set down as a valuable asset for the prestige of Germany abroad.

In order to measure the progress made, it is only necessary to consider the fate of the bigger Armament Bills during the last decades. This was all the more significant as the national idea had to act, not only on the lines of the Continental policy of Prussia and Germany so glorious in the past, but also on the lines of the new world policy, whose importance in the meantime lay more in the future. Not only the army, but also the navy, was concerned. The middle-class parties in the Reichstag had to advocate considerable material sacrifices in the country for disbursements for national purposes, and they therefore were obliged to lay greater stress on the national idea.

It is certainly a curious fact that in the most military and most warlike of the European nations the parties have resigned themselves so unwillingly to new demands for the military power of the Empire, that it has taken more than three and a half decades to achieve unanimity, at least among the middle-class parties.

## **Awakening Latent Patriotism**

The blame for this attitude attaches, not so much to lack of patriotism, as to that desire for power in party politics, and that obstinate devotion to the party programme, to which I referred above. It was the task of the Government to waken the latent patriotic feelings of all middle-class parties, to animate them, and spontaneously, and without prejudice, to uphold them when they seemed strong enough to co-operate in a practical manner in the work of the Empire. A German Government would act against the welfare of the nation if, owing to party prejudices of its own, it should repulse the national zeal of a party, and if the sacrifices of a party in the interests of the nation should seem of less value because its general trend in politics did not fall in with the Government's ideas.

For the Government the intensity of national feeling is by far the most important quality of a party. It will and must be possible to work with a party that is at bottom reliable from the national standpoint, for such a party will ultimately allow itself to be influenced in favour of national interests in the choice, often so hard in Germany, between the interests of the community in general and those of the party.

No German Minister need give up this healthy optimism, no matter how sceptically he may regard the parties in the ordinary course of politics. Firm belief in the ultimate victory of the national idea is the first condition of a really national policy. [During my term of office I never lost sight] of the glorious words which Schleiermacher uttered in the dark year of 1807: "Germany is still there, and her invisible strength is unimpaired." This belief we Germans must not forgo

## Imperial Germany

in the hurly-burly of our party squabbles, which still makes the display of spontaneous national feeling seem transitory, like a rare hour of rest.

A review of the fate of the German Army Bills during the last quarter of a century affords at the same time a picture of the changes in the parties with regard to the national idea. The Conservatives have a right to the reputation of never having refused a single man to their country, and the National Liberals, too, have never endangered the fate of an Army Bill. In this respect the old parties of the Cartel hold the foremost place.

Prince Bismarck had bequeathed an Army Bill to the new Reichstag of 1890; this Bill was introduced in a form of much less scope than that of the original draft, as conceived by the old Imperial Chancellor. Count Caprivi asked for 18,000 men and 70 batteries. In spite of the fact that the venerable Moltke spoke in favour of the Bill, its fate was doubtful for a long time. Eugen Richter refused it in the name of the whole Ultra-Liberal party. With the help of the Centre the Bill was passed by the Cartel parties, but the Centre only gave its consent on condition that subsequently a Bill for two-year military service should be introduced.

The great Army Bill of 1893 became a necessity so soon owing to the fact that the demands made by the preceding Bill had been insufficient for requirements; this showed how uncertain the foothold of the national majority of the middle-class parties was. The Centre vented on the Army Bill its resentment for the disappointment of its hopes with regard to educational

## The Social Democrats Win

policy in Prussia. Although its demand for two-year military service was included in the new Bill, the party could not make up its mind to vote for it. Among the Ultra-Liberals the national idea at that time was trying to find expression. But only six Ultra-Liberal deputies at last consented to vote for the Bill. In 1893, sixteen years before its realisation, there rose for a moment the hope of co-operation between the Conservatives and Liberals, including the Ultra-Liberals. The time, however, was not yet ripe. The rejection of the Bill by the Centre, Ultra-Liberals and Social Democrats was followed by the dissolution of the Reichstag.

In the elections the Ultra-Liberals in favour of the Army separated from the party of progress; but the elections did not result in a national majority without the Centre. The Social Democrats increased the number of their seats. The bulk of the Ultra-Liberals remained in opposition. The majority—201 against 185—was only obtained by means of the Polish party, which had increased from sixteen to nineteen.

Six years later the Government had to put up with very considerable reductions in its Bills, and nevertheless only succeeded in passing the new Army Bill with the help of the Centre after a violent struggle against the opposition of the Ultra-Liberals and Social Democrats. There was no question of ready or enthusiastic acceptance, and a conflict in home politics seemed very imminent. I found the majority which had passed the Tariff Bill ready to accept the Army increase of 10,000 men in the spring of 1905, but the Ultra-Liberals still held off. The case was much the same with the Navy Bills. Hot fights were the rule,

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and consent was usually the result of long discussions and explanations between the Government and the parties. In the year 1897 not even two cruisers were granted, and yet in the following year it was possible to get a majority in the same Reichstag for the first great Navy Bill.

In the interval, comprehensive and enlightening work had been done. The Emperor William II. had advocated the national cause with all his heart and soul. Learned men like Adolph Wagner, Schmoller, Sering, Lamprecht, Erich Marks and many others made successful propaganda for the fleet at that time and in subsequent years, especially among the educated classes. The Bill of 1898 was passed by a majority of 212 against 139 votes. Twenty members of the Centre, all the Ultra-Liberals and the Social Democrats voted against it.

The important Navy Bill of 1900 again found the Ultra-Liberals solidly on the side of the Opposition. The Centre this time voted as one man for the Bill after the number of cruisers demanded had been reduced from sixty-four to fifty-one. In the year 1906 these additional ships, which had been refused before, were granted by the majority which passed the Tariff Bill. In the same way the increase in the dimensions of the battleships, necessitated by the example of England, was granted.

In the end we certainly succeeded in obtaining majorities of the middle classes for all these Armament Bills. But their acceptance was nearly always the result of difficult negotiations, and often of inconvenient compromises. We were very far from being able to count

## The Colonial Debates

on sure and substantial national majorities for our legitimate and reasonable Armament Bills. More than once the decision hung in the balance. And had it not been, as was the case in the Army Bill of 1893, for the unexpected assistance of the Poles, success and failure would each time have been dependent on the presence or absence of the good will of the Centre. This was bound to give that party not only a very strong sense of power, but a great deal of actual power. The expression, "the all-powerful Centre," so often heard before 1907, was fully justified. In point of fact, a party, on whose good will the Empire was dependent in all questions of national existence, was virtually in possession of political leadership, at least in those matters which, in accordance with the Constitution, are open to the influence of parties and the representatives of the people.

When the Colonial debates of the winter of 1906 showed that it was by no means safe to count on the Centre, it became clear that some solution yet remained to be found for the problem of how to safeguard naval and military matters in the party warfare. The change of front of the party of progress, and the victory at the poll of the new majority of the Block, was the turning point. The Centre learnt that the fate of national questions no longer depended on it alone, and it learnt further that the negative attitude might well prove fatal to its powerful position in Parliament. [It will never again allow its attitude to national claims to be politically influenced by ill-feeling on a personal question or on matters of home politics.] The Ultra-Liberals proved, in the spring of 1912 and

## Imperial Germany

in the summer of 1913, that they consider the change of front carried out in 1906 a permanent one.

That there has been such a development of the national idea, and that such a change has come over the attitude of the parties towards Imperial questions of protection and armament, must fill every patriot with joy and confidence. Fifty years ago, King William found himself alone with his Ministry and a small Conservative minority, in the struggle to reorganise the Prussian Army. After the founding of the Empire, Bismarck had to fight obdurately with the parties for every Army increase, however small. The year 1893 witnessed once more a bitter struggle in home politics for an Army Bill. In October, 1899, the Emperor William II. lamented that, "in spite of urgent requests and warnings" during the first eight years of his reign, the increase in the Navy had been steadily refused. When at last the idea of a navy had taken root in the minds of the people, even then the individual Navy Bills were only passed after hard fights in Parliament.

The Armament Bills of 1912 were passed by the whole of the German middle-class parties in the Reichstag. The Army Bill of the year 1913 met with such a willing reception from all parties as had never before been accorded to any demand for armaments on land or at sea. For the Army Bill itself no serious exposition was really required. If the parties fought over the question of expense, it was for reasons due to the general situation in party politics, and considerations of very serious questions of finance. Not one of the middle-class parties, from the extreme Right to the

## The Armament Bills

Ultra-Liberals, even thought of making their consent to the Armament Bill itself dependent on the difficulties and differences of opinion in the question of meeting expenses. [Even before the war a necessary and well justified Army and Navy Bill could always count on a safe parliamentary majority. The period of the Block played a very essential part in the attainment of this success. It is impossible to conceive what without it the development of that long struggle would have been, which the Government had to carry on against the parties in order to make national ideas prevail. This struggle was the salient characteristic of our home policy from the founding of the Empire up to the outbreak of the world war; but now, let us hope, it is ended and belongs to past history.]

## CHAPTER XVI

### ATTITUDE OF THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATS<sup>1</sup>

IN August, 1914, at the grievous moment when the nation was summoned to national action, when our Emperor had uttered the beautiful words, that he no longer knew of any parties, he knew only Germans, the Social Democrats, who up till then had stood aside in all decisions regarding national questions, properly so called, came into line with the whole German nation. They, as well as the other parties, immediately assented to the war credits, and thereby in the hour of danger granted the country the armaments which they had always refused in the desired form in times of peace. They showed that their late leader, Bebel, had been in earnest when he said that if Germany were attacked he himself would shoulder his gun.

The grave hour in 1914, which we had not expected so soon, brought much that was great and lofty and matter for rejoicing; and without doubt the attitude of Social Democracy was one of the matters for greatest rejoicing. I myself, who during my term of office was always on bad terms, and sometimes on exceedingly bad terms, with the Social Democrats, shared in the liveliest and sincerest manner the general satisfaction of the nation.

<sup>1</sup> New to this edition; thirty-two pages of the old edition dealing with the Social Democrats are cancelled.

## An Unfounded Doubt

No one who knew what sound, deep-rooted patriotism resides in our working classes, ever was seriously concerned lest the Social Democratic movement should, in the hour of need, paralyse the striking power of the German Empire and of the people. The only doubtful point was whether the parliamentary leaders of the Social Democratic working men would quickly and surely decide to take the patriotism of the working masses into account. This doubt, if it existed anywhere, was proved unfounded by events. The Social Democratic leaders were guided by that love of their country and that consciousness of their duty to the nation, which they well knew the working classes, who formed their political following, to harbour; in so doing they acted not only patriotically, but also with far-seeing cleverness from the party point of view.

It must be considered a highly remarkable sign of political judgment, particularly on the part of the Social Democratic party, that they did not fall into the very frequent mistake of party politics, of letting time do them an injury by failing, from sheer party-political dogmatism, to recognise its signs. The Social Democratic leaders well know that they rendered their party signal service by the attitude they adopted on the outbreak of war, irrespective of the service they thereby did the interests of the nation and the State at a time of great danger.

This is really only one more proof that the wisest party policy is always that which meets the needs of the State. What is true of the hard necessities of war is ultimately true of the often disagreeable and unpleasant necessities of peace.

## Imperial Germany

Though it never occurred to any German that even a section of the Social Democratic working men would refuse to fulfil their duty of defending the nation in war, or indeed that they would wish to refuse, yet the conviction prevailed in wide circles abroad that on the outbreak of war Germany would have trouble on account of her Social Democratic question. There was unmistakable astonishment in the foreign Press when the German war credits were passed unanimously, and party questions were ignored by the nation as it rushed to arms. This mistake abroad is explained by the peculiar character of German Social Democracy, which is fundamentally different from the Socialism of other countries.

When Karl Marx, the most effective and most thoughtful demagogue of modern times, issued his fiery proclamation : "Working men of all countries, you must unite ! You have nothing to lose but your fetters, but you have the whole world to gain !" in all civilised countries socialistic labour parties and organisations were formed; these were partly of new and partly of older origin, but they all soon tried to get into touch with one another. In other lands, especially in the Latin countries, these Socialist parties fitted themselves into the party system of the nation, and their efforts were directed to achieving practical results in current politics; but German Social Democracy immediately set up a programme of the remote and often Utopian aims of Marx's theory; it announced a new and different order of the State, of society and of the nation, and consequently took up a position outside the ranks of national party life among the Germans. German

## Social Democratic Utopianisms

Social Democrats were really the only ones who took their socialistic ideals seriously, and after the war it will be many a long day before they learn to distinguish between ideals that can be realised and those that are hopelessly Utopian.

For a considerable period there was a strong tendency dominating Social Democracy, which refused all participation in the parliamentary life of the existing State and party systems, as being irreconcilable with socialistic ideals. Very gradually and hesitatingly did the Social Democrats take part in parliamentary life, and it is only a very short time ago that they consented actually to co-operate in a piece of legislative work. They have always laid stress on the fact that their ideals had nothing in common with the conception of law, the order of society and the national ideals on which the existing State system in Germany is based. From the very beginning all their political conceptions belonged to a different sphere from that of actual politics.

Moreover, they formed the only party in the civilised world that was absolutely sincere in including Marx's cosmopolitan ideas in its programme, and that defended these ideas with a vigour that is peculiar to German party organisations when their programme is in question. Abroad the common international interests of the proletariat were recognised to this extent, that Socialist leaders at International Congresses made more or less clever speeches in praise of the "Internationale," but they never made the least attempt to achieve its realisation. For the German Social Democrats, the "Internationale" has always been a matter of convic-

## Imperial Germany

tion, and what is far more where a German is concerned, a matter of feeling.

There is much that is traditional both in the possible and the impossible political aims of German Social Democracy, and especially in its ideas concerning constitutional reforms; similarly, its cosmopolitanism is really a characteristically German tradition which in the socialistic programme has assumed a one-sided party-political form.

The German has always had a conscious desire to be a bit of a citizen of the world. The German ideal of world citizenship has very, very often been disastrous for us in politics, and particularly in foreign politics; but in the world of thought it has inspired and permeated the loftiest works of our poets, the deepest works of our philosophers, and has borne its share in helping German intellect to conquer the whole world. Cosmopolitanism and internationalism have actually become our national peculiarity.

In the socialistic labour movements, the ideal of world-citizenship was given a particular interpretation, directed toward a goal that could apparently be reached. This, however, is a limitation which robs the ideal of its German liberty and greatness. The idea of the intellectual and moral community of nations, the "*seid umschlungen Millionen*" (all mankind shall mingle in an embrace) of Schiller's beautiful poem, this, for German Socialism, grew to represent the common interests and common struggles of one particular class of people: the wage earning proletariat. Just as Marx, in his passionate onesidedness, demanded. A queer alliance was thus formed between German particularism,

## Social Regeneration

and even German caste prejudice, and German sympathy for world citizenship. Because its ultimate and highest political aims lay in the realm of international ideals, German Social Democracy differed fundamentally from all other German parties, which, on the common ground of national traditions, made for the goal of national development by different paths. It wanted to be a non-national party in national life, and it succeeded in this to such an extent that, for decades, it resolutely opposed all the demands of German national policy.

This self-isolation of Social Democracy by its refusal to share national ideas, was further aggravated by intolerant emphasis of the so-called class consciousness of the proletariat, which originally was nothing but a special form of German caste feeling. The socialistic regeneration of the world was to be carried out by the proletariat for the proletariat. Other classes of the population were looked upon as the suffering objects of the policy of the proletariat. The Social Democrat felt that to him alone was granted the right of possession in the newly promulgated ordering of the world, in the advantages of a supposedly higher moral and social life.

We lived to see the extraordinary spectacle, that in the course of the nineteenth century in Germany the fourth Estate, considering itself to have higher privileges, proudly cut itself off from the other estates, which in former centuries had surrounded themselves with barriers against the lower orders. The legal and practical abolition of all class privileges in modern State life had the result that the working-class fourth

## Imperial Germany

Estate, which for a long time, and no doubt wrongly, had been regarded as being entitled to less privileges, in its turn claimed class privileges on its own behalf.

Such a condition of affairs could only be transitory, since it was abnormal. Just as the old struggle of the upper classes, so the new struggle of the Social Democratic class wore itself out on coming into contact with the hard facts of practical life, which placed in the foreground of political strife the accomplishment and consideration of measures affecting the vital interests of the industrial and agrarian classes.

In sober truth the German working men, with their Social Democratic organisation and views, were not really desperately anxious to find compensation for sensible and actual economic distress, in their hopes of founding a socialistic State, in which the proletariat of future centuries should rule, free from care. In reality, the working man desired the amelioration of his own lot at the time : higher wages, shorter working hours, help in sickness and provision for his old age; but the struggle between his interests and those of the employer did not tend away from national life, but rather led deep into its midst, for there was no chance of bringing it to a successful issue except upon the ground of the existing economic system, and the workman could win more freedom of action in the fight only by means of legislative action on the part of the existing State. Involuntarily, and often unconsciously, Social Democracy turned from its socialistic and international aims to social-political problems, the solution of which was a national matter.

This change from socialistic ideology to socialistic

## The Trades Unions

practice coincided with, and was due to, the growth of the Trades Union movement. While the number of the so-called organised Social Democrats increased slowly, that of the members of the Independent Trades Unions grew rapidly. The latter became three times as numerous as the former, so that the strength of Social Democracy now depends almost entirely upon the Trades Unions. But these placed in the forefront of their aspirations the attainment of tangible economic advantages for the workmen, advantages which could only be permanently secured in the course of legislation by the existing State.

The Independent, that is to say, the Social Democratic Trades Unions, clung to the socialistic programme; they remained the representatives of the "Internationale" and of the ideas of a future Socialist State, and politically they continued to be adherents of the Radical-Democratic agitation, all of which are legacies of the great French Revolution and of Germany before the March Revolution. In this way they did not effect any modification either in the Republican tendencies of Social Democracy, or in those which in their aims are revolutionary.

In pursuing a robust policy of present interests with tangible aims, these coalitions have, however, done much to change Social Democracy from a non-national party, imbued with blind class struggles and class fanaticism, into one representing the interests of German working men. They have shown the workman not only what he may hope from the desired socialistic State of the future, but also that he may win much from the present State.

## Imperial Germany

In addition to the Independent Trades Unions which work with the Social Democrats, other working men's organisations had arisen which serve the trade interests of the workers without pursuing the socialistic and Radical Democratic aims of the Social Democratic party. These organisations, with more than 1,500,000 members, together with the 2,500,000 members of the Independent Trades Unions, play a very considerable part in the Labour movement, and just because they have not mingled their representation of trade interests with Radical opposition in politics they have done a great deal for the constant improvement of the German working men's economic position. It is those parties, with which the Non-Social Democratic labour organisations were in sympathy, and in particular the Centre, that have helped to carry out the magnificent work of German social policy.

When the world war broke out the German working men could look back upon the results of half a century's labour policy, upon the successes of their own struggles in defence of their interests, upon the effects of a State legislation which had satisfied the claims, the wishes and the needs of the working man.

True, the Social Democratic party was stronger than ever before, but it had long represented a very different working class from that to which Marx exclaimed : "You have nothing to lose but your fetters !" The German workman, whether he were a Social Democrat or not, had indeed for a long time had much to lose. Though he might still be far from the goal of his desires, though he might sometimes still suffer grievously in the economic struggle, he had gone for-

## Only Hypothetical

ward, he could contemplate a secure condition of labour which enabled him to earn a living, he was protected from the consequences of sickness and the cares of old age. A comparatively large section of the German proletariat had gradually risen to the level of the lower middle classes. And the steady, if slow, rise of the German working men was in no way conditioned by common international interests of the proletariat, but by those of the general economic development, at home and abroad, of the German Fatherland.

I am not suggesting the possibility, but in case of a German defeat, how could social legislation be continued? Is it not evident that in a defeated Germany the structure of our social legislation, which is a model in its way, and has nowhere else been carried out so carefully and on such generous lines, must collapse?

The jejune facts of everyday life have achieved what no amount of teaching could do: they have convinced even the Social Democratic workman that his welfare is indissolubly bound up with the welfare and safety of the whole German people, with the might of the German Empire. When the Fatherland was in danger all socialistic and international ideals were as nothing compared with the sturdy patriotism, based on interest, which for the workman made the national war a struggle for his own interests. Nothing could have more clearly proved the ties which unite labour with the existing State than the fact that immediately after the outbreak of war it was just the Independent, the Social Democratic Trades Unions, which placed themselves at the disposal of the Empire for the fulfilment of the great economic tasks of the war.

## Imperial Germany

It will be no easy matter for the Social Democrats in future to reconcile their manifestations of loyalty to State and Fatherland during the war with the socialistic Radical-Democratic programme, to which they seem absolutely determined to cling. They will have to make up their minds to sacrifice many of their old aims, and if in the peace time to come they are to become more and more firmly entwined with national life in general, they will have to break with many of the tendencies and suggestions of their former class struggle. Fluctuations and setbacks will be unavoidable. It will be to the interests of all Germany, and also to that of labour, that Social Democracy should, by its moderation, prudence and insight, maintain the position of equality with the other parties which it has secured by its attitude in this war.

But it will also be one of the most important duties of the Government and the other parties, to smooth the way in time of peace for Social Democracy to take its part in State life, now that it has been won over to the national cause during the war. The State must deal justly and without prejudice with the working man, even if he is a Social Democrat. It must make it easy for him to feel that he enjoys the rights of citizenship, both in public and in social life. Clever and broad-minded State administration will be able to do a great deal in that direction.

Every patriot of insight without distinction of party position will endorse the words spoken in Berlin in March, 1915, by the Social Democratic Reichstag deputy, Herr Heine. He said :

“The quarrelsomeness and spirit of dissension which

## A Narrow Outlook

have always been peculiar to the German have survived the founding of the Empire, and have now struck inwards. Germany still moves far too much in the realm of ideas which belong to the time before the March Revolution; she is still bound by the narrow views of the petty bourgeoisie. The German considers every political opponent his personal enemy. The people, therefore, were divided into different camps. That has been materially altered by the war; yet we must realise that Germany is not only in danger now, but that even after victoriously concluding the war she will remain in danger, that our work will be harder then, our earnings less, our burdens greater, and the danger of new wars more imminent than before.

"The consciousness of unity in the nation must continue, therefore. Proscription, defamation and contempt of opponents must have an end, for they destroy the consciousness of unity and kinship. Therefore the persecution of fellow countrymen must stop. Each man may continue to fight for his own convictions, but with objective calm, and he must never forget that his opponent, too, desires the good of the nation. Only if we overcome the Philistinism amongst us, which can bear no dissenting voices, shall we attain that inner peace which makes fruitful work in the interests of the people possible."

The deputy, Herr Heine, thus expressed a wish which I uttered in my last speech in the German Reichstag on June 16, 1909, when I said: "I hope we shall reach the point when we do not necessarily consider another man a fool or a knave because he holds a different opinion from our own on some political or

## Imperial Germany

economic or social question. That will mean real progress in the direction of freeing ourselves from intellectual fetters and ridding ourselves of the bonds of Philistinism. But we have not yet reached that point."

Goethe knew where the shoe pinched when in a famous verse he compares himself who strove to free the Germans from the "bonds of Philistinism" with old Blücher who liberated us from the Frenchmen.

The true means of restraining the working men from adopting the seductive belief of the Socialists in an infinitely better future, is to pursue a courageous, wide-minded policy which can maintain the nation's satisfaction in the present conditions of life—a policy which brings the best powers of the nation into play; which supports and strengthens the middle classes, already numerous and ever increasing in number, the vast majority of whom steadily uphold the monarchy and the State; which, without bureaucratic prejudices, opens a State career to men of talent; and which appeals to the better feelings of the nation. The idea of the nation as such must again and again be emphasised by dealing with national problems, so that this idea may continue to move and to unite the parties.

Nothing has a more discouraging, paralysing and depressing effect on a clever, enterprising and highly developed nation such as the Germans, than a monotonous, dull policy which, for fear of an ensuing fight, avoids rousing passions by strong action. My predecessor in office, Prince Chlodwig Hohenlohe, was for long a very kind chief to me when he was ambassador in Paris, and he often conversed with me even when we were not on duty. Once, when he was praising

## Ministerial Qualities

a certain Bavarian statesman as being particularly capable, diligent and conscientious, I asked him why, as President of the Bavarian Ministry, he had not proposed this man for a Ministerial post. "He was not reckless enough for a Minister," replied the Prince very gravely. When I expressed my surprise that such a thoughtful, calm and exceedingly prudent man as Prince Hohenlohe could say such a thing, the wise and politic Prince answered: "You must not understand my remark as an encouragement to reckless action in life, to which young people incline only too readily. What I said was meant politically. A Minister must have a good amount of resolution and energy in his character. He must sometimes risk a big stake and ride at a high hurdle, otherwise he will never be any good."

Various similar remarks of Prince Bismarck's might be adduced in support of this one of Prince Hohenlohe's. Governments and Ministers must not avoid struggles. A sound nation has even more need of friction between itself and the Government than of friction between the parties. This friction produces the vivifying warmth, without which the political life of a people ultimately grows dull. It is a curious fact that the German has always felt the need of occasionally knocking up against the authorities. Nothing annoys him more than if the authorities get out of the way. And it will always be found that party antagonism is most intensified when the Government is disinclined to do battle now and again. The old German delight in fighting, of which we hear in history and legend, still lives on in our political life. A German considers that

## **Imperial Germany**

policy the best which does not leave him in peace, but which keeps him busy fighting and allows him occasionally to display his prowess; in a word, a policy which invigorates by its own vigour.

True, there is a difference between a political fight and political vexation. The former is vivifying, the latter venomous. The people are well able to perceive whether the Government proves its power in great matters, or abuses it in small ones. It is the same with the master of the State as with the master of the home. A home tyrant is mostly a weakling; strong-willed men are usually broad-minded and indulgent in little things at home, because they use their strength for great things. By a policy of pin-pricks a Government only makes itself unpopular without earning respect. Nothing more easily produces discontent with existing conditions, nothing tends more to foster Radicalism among the people than narrow-minded bureaucracy, clumsiness on the part of the police, and, above all, interference in intellectual matters, in which a civilised nation quite rightly wishes to remain unmolested.

It is not a specifically German quality, but one common to all mankind, that personal experience of injustice, and of vexation at mistakes on the part of the administration, lives more vividly and more permanently in the memory than the most reasonable political conviction.

Social Democrats suck the finest honey from the flower of bureaucracy. It is only by living abroad that one can appreciate thoroughly what Germany, and especially Prussia, owes to her civil service, which has been built up by great rulers and excellent Ministers

## Misplaced Energy

out of the precious material of German loyalty and conscientiousness, love of work and power to work, and has achieved great things in all spheres. If, when a German returns home, the country from the Alps to the Baltic and from the Maas to the Memel lies before him like a well-tended garden, the merit is in no small measure due to the civil service.

The more this service keeps free from our ancestral faults of pedantry and caste-feeling, while preserving its traditional advantages, the wider its outlook, the more humane its attitude in intercourse with all classes of the population, the more enlightened its views, the greater will be its achievements in the future. Indulgence and freedom from prejudice in small things can well be combined with ruthless energy in great ones. It is a common mistake amongst us to display energy in our manners and our speech, rather than in our actions; also we are apt to take rough manners and rude words for strength and, on the other hand, politeness for weakness. Amiability and courtesy do not exclude determination and vigour; good manners can well be combined with energetic action. Contrary to the well-known Roman precept, we are too much inclined to display great vigour (*fortitudo*) as regards the outward forms and in trifling affairs, whereas we go far, often much too far, in conciliatoriness (*suavitas*) as regards the matter and in great affairs.

As to the home policy of the future in Germany, the attitude of Social Democracy in August, 1914, confirms anew the belief that I expressed thirteen years ago in the Reichstag, when I said that the Monarchy, which at the beginning of the last century had, without

## **Imperial Germany**

any violent upheaval, made the transition from the old to the new form of government, at the present time had sufficient strength and insight to alleviate those evils and abuses which, in addition to many good things, the modern development of affairs has produced, and which we sum up in the expression "The Social Question," and would be able to do away with them so far as that is possible in this imperfect world.

## CHAPTER XVII

### GERMANIC INFILTRATION OF POLAND

A DISTINCTION must be made between the domain of State rule and a nation's ownership. The two rarely coincide. The attempt to make them fit, whether it be by obtaining State control over regions where the nation has spread, or whether it be by spreading national civilisation in the domain where the State has power, is responsible for a great number of complications in recent history. It has found its most modern expression in that form of colonial policy which is called, sometimes not quite rightly and sometimes quite wrongly, Imperialism.

Nations of military ability, economic skill and superior culture, will mostly reach further with the arm of their State power than with the sway of their national culture, and will expend their energy on making the national conquest follow in the wake of the political.

Weak and incapable nations must look on while foreign nationalities gain in number and importance within the borders of their State.

There is no third course. In the struggle between nationalities one nation is the hammer and the other the anvil; one is the victor and the other the vanquished. If it were possible in this world to separate nationalities definitely and clearly by means of frontier

## Imperial Germany

posts and boundary stones, as is done for States, then the world's history and politics—by which history is made—would be relieved of their most difficult task. But State boundaries do not separate nationalities. If it were possible henceforward for members of different nationalities, with different language and customs, and an intellectual life of a different kind, to live side by side in one and the same State, without succumbing to the temptation of each trying to force his own nationality on the other, things on earth would look a good deal more peaceful. But it is a law of life and development in history, that where two national civilisations meet, they fight for ascendancy ; that where two different nationalities are bound to the same place, it is difficult to make both contented, and that under such conditions friction easily arises. In that part of old Poland where, after the partition, most was done to meet Polish wishes, it is perhaps shown more clearly than anywhere else that measures, adopted on the one side in good faith, may rouse excitement and opposition on the other. Did the Poles succeed in contenting the Ruthenians in Galicia ? Do not the Ruthenians in the Carpathians and on the Pruth make the same [complaints, and even more violent ones, against the Poles, as the latter on the Warthe and the Vistula do against us?] Other countries, too, resound with the battles of nationalities, and the accusations of one nationality against another.

Every nation is, indeed, convinced of the higher value and consequently of the better right of its own civilisation, and is inspired by a strong desire, which is like an unconscious natural force, to attain

## Anglo-Saxon Egotism

more and more authority for its own civilisation. Not every nation is conscious of this force. The great Roman generals and statesmen who were the first to embark on world politics, were well aware of it, when they advanced, conquering as they went, into Greece, Asia Minor, North Africa, above all into Gaul and Germany where they followed up the conquest by arms with the conquest by superior Roman civilisation.

Such a steady consciousness of national civilisation exists to-day among the English people. The Englishman is deeply imbued with the idea of the superiority of Anglo-Saxon culture. He disapproves at times if other nations make more or less energetic propaganda for their own culture, but he never raises the question whether England herself is justified in embarking upon such proceedings. He is convinced that English rule and the consequent Anglicising is a blessing, and he bases his right to expansion and conquest on his sense of the superiority of Anglo-Saxon civilisation and Anglo-Saxon institutions. The grand fabric of the British Empire, the greatest the world has seen since the Roman Empire, for which no sacrifice of life or property was ever refused, was and is supported by the steadfast consciousness and firm intention on the part of English people of being bearers of a higher civilisation to every spot where English power extends. The English belief in the superiority of their own intellectual, moral, religious, legal and economic life is the vital force in English national policy. [This spirit which inspires every Briton to this very day enables a handful of English officials and

## **Imperial Germany**

a small force of British soldiers to govern 300,000,000 Indians.]

Higher civilisation has always bestowed political rights. The belief in a real or supposed higher civilisation has always provoked a claim to rights. When France, after the Great Revolution, flooded Europe with her armies, she based her right to conquest on the supposed blessings of Republican freedom. She felt herself the bearer of superior political culture to other nations, especially the Germans and Italians. In our country in particular there were not a few who recognised this right, and were only cured of their error by the bitter experiences of Napoleonic despotism. In romance countries wide circles are still possessed by this error. The civilising mission of the French Revolution was based on a fundamental misconception of the nature of civilisation in which political institutions have only a subordinate value as compared with religion, morals, law and education, and it condemned itself by the growing brutality of Napoleonic rule. But there are civilising missions which are justified. For instance, those that the Christian Colonial Powers have to fulfil in Africa at the present time. Thus Russia was justified as a bearer of higher civilisation to Central Asia. And if ever the battle between the higher and lower civilisations should cease in the world's history, our belief in the further development of mankind would lose its foundation. We should be bereft of a great and ideal hope.

It was a mission of civilisation that in the past led us Germans across the Elbe and the Oder towards the East. The work of colonisation in the east of Germany, which, begun nearly a thousand years ago,

## **Peaceful Colonisation**

is not yet concluded to-day, is not only the greatest but the only one in which we Germans have succeeded. Never in the history of the world was less blood spilt or less violence used in colonising on such a large scale as this.

This is particularly true of German colonisation in the former Kingdom of Poland. For centuries the German colonists, often summoned to the country by its kings, lived as loyal Polish subjects and taught the Poles higher civilisation. Even those times, when the Germans were oppressed in Poland and often deprived of their rights, tell no story of German revolt there. When the Poles proved themselves unfit to maintain government, and the strong Prussian State with its law and order assumed control of parts which had formerly belonged to the domain of Poland, the work of German civilisation had been going on in these parts for centuries already. The rare case supervened that the establishment of State rule followed and did not precede the tasks of colonising and civilising.

The annexation by the Prussian State of our Eastern provinces, Posen and West Prussia, would not and could not have come to pass if the Polish Republic of Nobles had been a State capable of continued existence. When its incorporation in the German dominion of the Prussian State took place, the effect was that of a belated, political acquisition of rights which the German inhabitants of West Prussia and Posen had created long before by their civilising achievements. Quite apart from the fact that if Prussia had not placed the Germans in Poland under German rule, they would have fallen under the dominion of Russia.

## Imperial Germany

Our eastern provinces are our German new country. Although they were incorporated several generations earlier than Alsace-Lorraine and Schleswig-Holstein, yet they are younger national acquisitions. For one thing, in the West it is only old German domain that has been recovered, possessions where the German Emperors held undisputed sway, before ever a German had crossed swords with a Wend east of the Elbe, or a German plough had furrowed Wendic soil. This new land in the East, entered by right of conquest at the time when Germany's Imperial power was at its zenith, had to afford us compensation, from the point of view of the State and above all of the nation, for losses of old possessions in the West. [In the Prussian Chamber of Deputies, in January, 1902, when no one thought of the possibility of a European catastrophe, or of a change in the Balance of Power in Europe, I said: "There was a time when] one had to speak with bated breath of the Holy German Empire, when the German Empire extended farther in the South and West than now. We do not dream of wishing that those times would return; we do not dream of extending our frontiers in any direction whatever. But what Providence has granted us as a compensation for our losses elsewhere, our possessions in the East, those we must and will retain."

Considered from a distance, the German movement from east to west, and then again to the east, appears as a uniform whole. In the seventh century we Germans abandoned all land east of the Elbe and penetrated far into the West, into the heart of France. Holland, Flanders, Brabant, Burgundy, Luxemburg

## Looking Ahead

and Switzerland were under the sway of the German Empire, were in part national German land. In the fourteenth century the upper course of the Rhone was the boundary of the German Empire. But these domains were lost, politically owing to the downfall of German Imperial power, nationally because our body as a nation was really not big enough to fill the wide garment of the Holy Empire. [No one in Germany thinks of recovering the territories in which are the sources and the mouth of the Rhine. We have always conscientiously respected the complete independence and absolute sovereignty of Switzerland and the Netherlands, and we shall continue in future to do so. In contradistinction to our present opponents, we have never hindered the free development of nations and States whether in Europe or in Asia, America and North and South Africa.

If many patriots hope that we shall retain the position that we have won at the cost of so much bloodshed in Belgium, and more especially on the Belgian shores of the North Sea, the wish may be ascribed to the obvious consideration that this position alone can secure for us practical and permanent protection from new attacks and the desire for revenge on the part of our enemies. But no sensible man will ever entertain the idea of recovering ground which there is no strategic or economic need for us to possess.

At the end of the Middle Ages, when we were losing ground in the West, we had already found compensation in the East; the Germans were already streaming back into their old Germanic home which they had quitted during the *Völkerwanderung* (migration of

## Imperial Germany

nations) and into which Slavonic tribes had made their way. And the German colonists who settled east of the Elbe, beyond the Oder and on the banks of the Vistula and the Pregel, came from Western districts, many of them from those very parts which we lost later on.]

The great work of Eastern colonisation is the best and most permanent result of our brilliant history during the Middle Ages, a piece of work performed, not by a single German tribe, but by all of them together. One and all—Saxons, Franks, Bavarians, Suabians, Thuringians, Lotaringians, Flemish and Frisians—sent men of their tribe to the East of Germany—laymen and churchmen, knights and peasants. The new colony east of the Elbe at that time served to bridge the differences between the German tribes, which in some cases were very profound. It was common German land, with a population which was nothing and wished to be nothing but German, in contradistinction to the Wends and the Poles.

If, later on, it was the men from this mother-country of the Brandenburg-Prussian monarchy east of the Elbe, who in the hour of need manifested their will as Germans against the foreigner; if in our times it was by their means that under the black-and-white banner of the State of the German Order of Knighthood the union of the German lands and German peoples in one Empire was realised, the first seeds were sown by the formation and settlement of these German colonies. For what they gave to the less hospitable East in the Middle Ages, the German tribes of the West and the South were repaid a thousandfold by the East, when Prussia

## Unfortunate Ventures

brought State union to the whole of Germany. [Under the same colours, beneath which the German knights conquered the Eastern Marches for Germanism, the armies of the glorious State which has taken over the colours, the name and above all the original spirit of the State of the German Order of Knighthood, are winning victories in the East and in the West.]

The centuries of the Ottos, the Salic kings and the Hohenstauffens can show deeds and events of more dazzling brilliancy than the brave and diligent colonisation of the land east of the Elbe, but they can show nothing greater. The conquest of the old Prussian land by the German Order of Knighthood was but a pale reflection of the romantic glamour of the crusades and the expeditions to Rome. And the tough work of civilisation carried on by the monks in the eastern forests and marshes, and by the German citizens in the new and growing towns of the east, appears utterly prosaic and humdrum in comparison with the grand but unfortunate ventures of the world-policy of the old emperors.

But, as so often in history, the brilliant achievements that drew all eyes were, for the moment only, soon to disappear; while the insignificant events which were accomplished on what was comparatively a side track of German history were the real things that were to be of value subsequently. [The emblems of the Holy Roman Empire of the German nation, the orb and the sword, the mantle and the sceptre, and the old Imperial crown of Germany came from Sicily, and the Emperor Henry VI., who won them, lies buried in the Cathedral at Palermo. From there the Imperial emblems were

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brought to the Treasury in Vienna, where they now remain. But the first Emperor of the new German Empire placed upon his head the royal Prussian crown in Königsberg, the capital of the territory of the German Order of Knighthood.]

To-day we think with more gratitude of the German Order of Knighthood that gave Prussia to us, of the Guelphs who won Holstein and Mecklenburg for us, and of the Ascanians of Brandenburg, than of the victories in Italy and Palestine. The most portentous national disaster was not the sad downfall of the Hohenstauffens owing to the intrigues of [Italian] policy, but the defeat of Tannenberg, which resulted in the loss of a large portion of the colonisation work of centuries, and the cession to the Poles of West Prussia and Danzig, and which put an end to the proud independence of the State of the German Order of Knighthood.

It was the wise statesmanship of the Hohenzollern Electors that prevented our national possessions in the extreme east from slipping completely out of our grasp, and that here in the eastern outposts of Germany combined the interests of the German nation as a whole with those of the State of Brandenburg-Prussia. [Had it not been for the black day of Tannenberg, the defeat at the little town in East Prussia whose name has now acquired different and pleasanter associations, thanks to the glorious victory of Field-Marshal von Hindenburg, it is questionable whether] the State of the Order of Knighthood would have been able to keep the East permanently German, in defiance of the superior power of Poland.

There is no question but that we should have lost

## Prussia in the Balance

East and West Prussia for ever, as we had lost our western and southern domains in former times, if the House of Hohenzollern had not arisen as a tireless and cautious, but brave and determined, warden of the German Marches. The Great Elector asserted his rights to East Prussia—rights acquired by a clever family policy—at the point of the sword, when he bore the Red Eagle of Brandenburg to victory over the White Eagle of the King of Poland at the battle of Warsaw, and thus broke the bonds of Polish suzerainty. Very wisely the first King called himself King *in* Prussia, and thereby indicated the hope that his successors would be Kings *of* Prussia by ultimately acquiring West Prussia as well. And this hope was fulfilled when the Great King received West Prussia, at the first partition of Poland, as the prize of victory in the Seven Years' War, as Frederick the Great's biographer, Reinhold Koser, so well expressed it. Only to the victor of Rossbach, Leuthen and Zorndorf did the Empress Catherine grant a share of Polish land that had ceased to have any right to existence as a State, since the Republic of Nobility had been in a condition of anarchy.

West Prussia was regarded, not as newly acquired foreign land, but as German land that had been recovered; and rightly so. For this country had become German, politically speaking, under the rule of the Order of Knighthood, and it had become German owing to the work of German settlers in town and country. But Prussia, besides giving back to the West Prussian Germans German rule and the glorious right to be German citizens of a German State, gave to her new Polish subjects freedom and rights.

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King Stanislaus Leszczinski had lamented his country as the only one in which the mass of the people lacked all the rights of mankind. The mild yet stern, free yet limited, and just rule of the great Prussian King conferred on the Polish population what it had lacked before. "The surest means of giving this oppressed nation better ideas and morals will always be gradually to get them to intermarry with Germans, even if at first it is only two or three of them in every village," wrote Frederick the Great before the year of partition, 1772. Before a single foot of Polish land had come into the possession of the Germans the Great King, at a time when the nationality problem was still unknown, characterised Prussia's future task of civilisation as a Germanisation. Immediately after taking possession, he began the work of colonising, and sought and found settlers throughout Germany. The King, too, only continued what had been begun in the Middle Ages, the national conquest of the East of Germany, by means of settling German farmers in the country and German artisans, merchants and tradesmen in the towns.

When, in 1886, Bismarck proceeded to his policy of Polish settlement on a larger scale, as in so many of his greatest national enterprises, he merely seized the reins that the Great King had held, and that had dragged along the ground since his death. A proof, amongst many others, how uniform is the national history of a people, and that from the national point of view there are not two possibilities of equal validity, but only one with a validity of its own.

Though it is true that in different circumstances

## Cutting Up Poland

we must not slavishly imitate the great models of the past, yet it is equally true that the great points of view by which our ablest men have been guided, maintain their worth for all times and on all occasions, and that they cannot be disregarded with impunity.

It is well known that of the huge addition of quondam Polish land which fell to Prussia's share at the second and third partitions of Poland, but little was left to her at the reconstitution in 1815—West Prussia and the present province of Posen, altogether not more than seven and a half per cent. of the old kingdom of Poland. Even though the province of Posen, with its Archbishopric dating from the year 1000, had become the heart of the Polish kingdom, yet in the course of centuries it had become that part of the great domain which was most strongly permeated with German elements. By incorporating this old-established German population in the eastern districts Prussia undertook a national German duty, in addition to her natural duties as a State towards the Poles who live within her borders and have become Prussian subjects.

[Goethe once said in a conversation about the difference between private and political morality, that the Poles had been ruined by their confused habits of thought, and that this confusion had rendered their ruin inevitable. Nevertheless, no one will deny that this gifted and courageous nation has suffered a tragic fate.]

Just as it is wrong in the necessary fight against the Social Democrats to hurt the feelings of the working classes, so it is wrong in the fight dictated by reasons of State against the propaganda for the re-

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establishment of a greater Poland, to hurt our Polish fellow-citizens who fought [with the brilliant prowess peculiar to the nation] under the Prussian standards in the wars of 1866 and 1870, as also in the present war. Because we prize our own nationality so highly we must respect the Pole and sympathise with the loyalty with which he clings to his national memories. But this respect and sympathy stop short of the point where arise the desire and ambition to attack the unity and solidarity of the Prussian monarchy. No consideration for the Polish people must hinder us from doing all we can to maintain and strengthen German nationality in the former Polish domains. [Nobody dreams of wishing to thrust out, drive out, or exterminate the Poles. Even the German opponents of a vigorous policy in the Eastern Marches admit how greatly the condition of the Poles has improved under Prussian administration; the Poles themselves cannot seriously deny it. Every comparison between conditions of Prussian and Russian Poland shows what Prussia has done to improve things for her Polish subjects.] But it is the German duty and the German right of the Prussian Government to see that the Germans do not get driven out of the East of Germany by the Poles.

Nothing is further from the aims of our policy in the Eastern Marches than a fight against the Poles; its object is to protect, maintain and strengthen the German nationality among the Poles, consequently it is a fight for German nationality.

[The German seed in the East must not be lost, as so much of what we have sown in the world has been.

## Widespread Germanic Influence

Many nations owe part of their greatness and prosperity to Germany and German ways: The United States with 10,000,000 citizens of German origin, Russia with her German colonists and many statesmen and generals with German blood in their veins, Hungary and Bohemia who learnt culture from Germany, Sweden whose aristocracy and middle classes are largely of German extraction, France and England whose military, intellectual and commercial status have always shown traces of German influence.

Nearly all European dynasties are of German origin, everywhere the *Völkerwanderung* (migration of nations) left Germanic deposits. What have we derived from all this noble seed? Within our own boundaries, in the German East, we want to see the German seed grow and ripen.

This struggle for German nationality in the East,] carried on with varying success and by various means, runs through the period of a century which has passed since the delimitation at the Congress of Vienna of the boundaries of the re-established Prussian State. The task of solving the Polish problem would probably have been easier for Prussia if vain hopes had not been roused in the latter by the artificial and untenable Grand Duchy of Warsaw, created by Napoleon. The Poles would very likely have been spared painful experiences on our side as well as on the other side of the frontier in 1830, 1848 and 1863, if the memory of the ephemeral creation of a State by the first Napoleon had not lived in their hearts. The thought that the partition of the Polish Republic among the Eastern Powers from 1793 to 1807 had only been temporary,

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naturally made it harder for the Poles, after the fall of Napoleon and the States he had founded to serve the military aims of France, to regard the accomplished facts as final.

[It is very well known that Prince Bismarck considered an independent Polish State incompatible with the interests of our existence, and he openly and emphatically expressed his conviction in speeches, letters, conversation and, shortly before his death, in his political testament, "Gedanken und Erinnerungen" ("Reflections and Reminiscences"). In the winter of 1887-88, a time when relations between Austria and Russia were very strained, he discussed the possibility of war among the three empires with Prince Henry VII., of Reuss, at that time Ambassador in Vienna, and he concluded with these words: "And what shall we do when we have defeated Russia? Re-establish Poland by any chance? Why, then, in another twenty years we might make another alliance among the three empires for the purpose of a new and fourth partition of Poland. That is a pleasure that would hardly justify a great and terrible war."]

Prince Bismarck also repeatedly pointed out the danger that an independent Poland might become the natural ally of France, England or any of our opponents. A new Polish State allied with Austria would be dangerous for the Habsburg Monarchy, since such a combination might lead to the weakening of the German element in Austria. In addition to this, Polish hopes of getting possession of the Prussian districts, where both German and Polish are spoken, and a propaganda for the attainment of this object would

## What Made Prussia Great

put an undue strain upon Austro-German relations. These were the views held by Bismarck on the Polish question.

We must certainly not forget that the Prussian monarchy waxed great by the breaking up of the Polish Republic, that the black eagle,

His flight is slow,  
He carries the world's history,

rose by doing battle with the white eagle. If this world war should fulfil the hopes of the Poles, if we should make a permanent reality for the Poles of what they only obtained transitorily from our most dangerous enemy, Napoleon I., if 150 years later than the great king and the first partition of Poland an independent or autonomous Poland should be established once more, then the indissoluble union of the Prussian monarchy with the lands forming its eastern frontiers must be secured with even greater determination, and the future of German nationality in the bilingual provinces be tended with greater care and diligence. That which the sword of Germany has achieved for the Polish cause with German might and German blood, must not subsequently be permitted to injure the Prussian State and Germanism.]

The task Prussia had to fulfil in the domain, formerly Polish, that she had recovered in 1815 and that had been in her possession since 1772, was obvious enough. On the one hand, she had to oppose the great Polish propaganda with the greatest determination; on the other hand, she had to lavish great care on the maintenance and furtherance of German nationality in the

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eastern provinces. These two duties each involved the other, in so far as the centrifugal hopes of the Poles must lose ground in proportion as a strong contingent of Germans, settled in the eastern provinces, counterbalanced it.

If, at the beginning, after the War of Liberation, this task had been as clearly recognised and as firmly attacked as by Frederick the Great, the Prussian Government would not repeatedly in the course of temporary moods, which were misunderstood, have allowed itself to be diverted from the path so clearly indicated, and we should certainly have been considerably farther on the road to the solution of our problem in the Eastern Marches. It has happened so often in politics that mistakes were made, not because with quick decision the obvious thing was done, but because, owing to sentiment and doubts, a clear and absolute decision could not be arrived at.

Even in politics the simplest thing, if not always, yet mostly is the best.

The hackneyed phrases with which the political opponents and supporters of a definite national policy in the Eastern Marches favour each other, characterise the various phases of our Prussian policy in Poland very superficially. The aim of Prussian policy in the Eastern Marches has always been to reconcile subjects of Polish nationality to the Prussian State and the German nation. There can be no doubt except as to the different means by which this reconciliation is to be attained. There has never been a question of anything else, whether it was Zerboni, the advisers of Frederick William IV., and Caprivi, or Flottwell, Grolmann,

## Helping the Pole

Bismarck, Miquel and I, myself, who determined the character of the policy in the Eastern Marches.

This policy must ultimately reconcile our Polish fellow-countrymen to the fact that they belong to the Prussian State and to the German Empire. Only this must not be achieved at the expense of our national possessions in the East, or of the unity and sovereignty of the Prussian State.

It has rarely happened that a State has adopted such an unprejudiced and good-natured attitude towards members of another nationality living within its borders as that adopted by Prussia toward her Poles in the second and third decades of the nineteenth century.

[When Louis XIV. had extended the limits of his realm by successful wars, the first thing he did in 1684 was to forbid his Alsatian, Flemish and Catalonian subjects to use any but the French language in their courts of law and administration, and in the year II. of the one and indivisible Republic the Convention, although their principles and ideas were very different from those of the "Grand Roi," repeated this prohibition. After regaining possession of the Province of Posen and West Prussia, of which Napoleon had deprived her, Prussia treated her Polish subjects with fatherly gentleness, very great allowances were made for Polish peculiarities,] the blessings of the Stein-Hardenberg reforms were conferred on the Poles in full measure; an agricultural Loan Society helped Polish agriculture, which was in a terrible plight after the wars; a Provincial Diet in Posen ensured that local Polish interests should be represented; the members

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might be elected, and the people elected Poles; a Polish governor was associated with a Prussian president.

The result was the revolt of 1830. Prussia had not only vainly striven to win the favour of the Poles. She had done more; for the sake of the Poles in the Eastern Marches she had forgotten to care for the Germans there, in that she had placed this German and Polish district under a purely Polish administration.

The men who worked in Posen from 1830-40, the President von Flottwell and General von Grolmann, bethought themselves once more of Prussia's duty in the East to men of German nationality. The second phase of our policy in the Eastern Marches began; it resumed the thread of the national traditions of the Middle Ages of the policy of the Great King, and it indicated the course of policy in the Eastern Marches to Bismarck and to me. The Polish Governor disappeared; by means of the suspension of elections for the Diet it became possible to appoint German officials, and, as far as the slender means of the Government permitted, a modest beginning was made to settle German landowners in the Eastern Marches. The policy of Flottwell was no more hostile to the Poles than was our later policy in the Eastern Marches, which continued on the lines he had laid down. In contradistinction to the unsuccessful policy of 1815-30, its only aim was to assist German nationality to its rights side by side with Polish rights, remembering the duties to Germans that Prussia had taken over when it gained possession of the old domain of the Colonists. In fact the Poles were deprived, not of their rights as citizens, but of privileges.

## **Polish Demands**

The attempt to reconcile the Poles to Prussian government by granting them special rights was repeated in the decade following the transfer of Flottwell from Posen to Magdeburg, which took place in 1840; the culminating point was the so-called "national reorganisation" of Posen, which came to nothing. The "reorganisation" was to be effected in the following way: the Eastern and more Polish part of the province of Posen was to be separated from the Western and more German part, and to be administered entirely by the Poles. The Poles demanded complete autonomy in the whole province, like that which Hungary now possesses in the Habsburg monarchy. The Germans in the province grew violently excited at the threatened loss of their nationality. The result of this unhappy attempt was a feeling of bitterness hitherto unknown between the two nationalities in the East.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### DENATIONALISING THE POLE

AFTER a long period in the 'sixties and 'seventies, taken up with the work of founding and consolidating the Empire, which resulted in indifference to the struggle between the nationalities in the East, Bismarck in 1886 inaugurated his national policy in the Eastern Marches on a large scale, after he had introduced State control of the schools in Posen in 1872, and in 1873 the German language as that which was to be used for instruction.

The period of Flottwell's administration could at first be nothing but a correction in the national sense of the policy in the Eastern Marches. With Bismarck there began a determined fight for German nationality. Up till then the policy had been defensive, but, under Bismarck, Prussia began to take the offensive in order to rescue German nationality in the East, to maintain it and to strengthen it as much as possible. It is natural that the Poles were thrown into a state of violent excitement, that they prepared to defend themselves, and with their splendid organisation plunged into the fray. The antagonism between the two nationalities grew more acute. The policy pursued in the Eastern Marches influenced the whole of party politics. It is quite true that our home politics were not made easier by our national policy

## In the Eastern Marches

in the Eastern Marches, that a new cause of trouble and excitement was thereby added, and that the great Polish propaganda among the Poles in Prussia grew more general and more violent.

The opponents of Prussian policy in the Eastern Marches, Germans as well as Poles, are fond of employing the argument that great unrest has been caused by this national policy, begun by Bismarck himself and carried on subsequently in accordance with his ideas. Such an argument can only bear upon the general political shell and not on the core of our national problem as regards the Poles. It means nothing more than the easy and cheap platitude, that in foreign as well as in home politics, peace and tranquillity may always be had if we never strive to reach a goal which can only be attained with difficulty and by fighting. Such tranquillity is always pretty easy to get in politics.

The problem of our policy in the Eastern Marches is this: Shall we permit, shall we, by our inactivity, encourage the Eastern domains, i.e. Posen, West Prussia, Upper Silesia and parts of East Prussia, to slip once more from the grasp of German nationality, or not?

To ask this question is to answer it. It is the duty and the right of the Germans to maintain our national ownership in the East of Prussia, and, if possible, to increase it. The seventy years between the Congress of Vienna and the inauguration of the Prussian policy of colonisation made it clear that neither scrupulous respect for Polish nationality, nor the ignoring of the nationality question in the East, could in the least

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prevent German nationality from being slowly but surely driven out of the East by that of the Poles.

Only a well-thought-out scheme to further German nationality could prevent the latter from succumbing utterly. If the differences between the nationalities were thereby immediately intensified, it was certainly unfortunate, but it could not be avoided. In political life there are often hard necessities whose behests we obey with a heavy heart, but which must be obeyed in spite of the sympathies and emotions. Politics is a rough trade in which souls burdened with sentiment rarely bring even a simple piece of work to a successful issue.

With a fundamental Law of Settlement in 1886 Bismarck began to fight for the land on a big scale. He demanded and received a hundred million marks for the purpose of buying land and settling German peasants on it; that is, the purpose of increasing the numbers of the German element in the Eastern Marches. The work of colonisation is the backbone of Prussian policy in the Eastern Marches, for it settles Germans in the Eastern domain. And the whole problem in those parts is the problem of the relative numerical strength of the German population as compared with the Poles. The national acquirement of the eastern parts of Germany was begun by settlement a thousand years ago, and it is only by settlement that national possession can be maintained. The problem of the Eastern Marches is at bottom as uncomplicated as possible. Its solution depends less on political wisdom than on political courage.

Bismarck set to work vigorously on the basis of the

## Count Caprivi's Concessions

new law, and during the first five years, from 1886 to 1890, about 46,000 hectares<sup>1</sup> were acquired from Polish owners. The beginning of the 'nineties afforded a splendid chance to the activities of the Settlement Commission, as an attendant phenomenon of an otherwise lamentable event. Owing to the plight of agriculture, the price of land fell rapidly, and it would have been easy to acquire a huge mass of land from Polish owners for the purposes of subsequent colonisation by Germans. But just at that time Count Caprivi thought it necessary, for parliamentary reasons, [to make a change of policy in the Eastern Marches.] Concessions on the questions of schools and church were followed by assistance for the Polish Land Bank; that was equivalent to the rescue of the Polish landowners from whom the Settlement Commission had to endeavour to acquire land. The immediate and desired parliamentary object was in so far attained, that the Polish faction voted for the Army Bill of 1893.

But it soon became evident that the attitude of the parliamentary faction, as is often the case, did not correspond to the opinions of the party in the country. On the occasion of the discussion of the Navy Bill, the majority of the faction refused to follow their leader, Koscielski. Herr von Koscielski himself made that incautious speech at Lemberg in 1894, which contributed in a considerable degree to the change in Prussian policy in the Eastern Marches to the course laid down by Bismarck. At that time, in September, 1894, the German Association of the Eastern Marches was formed, after Germans from that district had

<sup>1</sup> One hectare = 2·47 acres.

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visited the old Imperial Chancellor in Varzin and paid him homage.

The traditions of Bismarck found a prudent interpreter in Miquel after the retirement of Caprivi. New funds were placed at the disposal of the Settlement Commission in 1898, and land was once more acquired on a larger scale. But the words of the poet, "Eternity will not bring back what one has refused to accept from a moment," again proved true in the case of our policy in the Eastern Marches. The favourable opportunity in the estate market, which had been allowed to slip at the beginning of the 'nineties, was past. The Polish landowners had been helped over the critical time; the Poles had had the chance of organising themselves for the battle for the land; whereas from 1886 to 1888 on an average 11,000 hectares were acquired yearly from the Poles by the Settlement Commission, it was only possible to buy from the Poles 911 hectares in 1895, 1,804 hectares in 1896, and an average of 2,500 hectares yearly from 1897 to 1899. The land required for purposes of settlement had to be furnished more and more by German landowners.

The energy with which the Poles organised their resistance to the German attack on their soil deserves admiration. German activity in colonisation was replied to by Polish counter activity. The Poles, for their part, divided their estates into small lots, for which they found colonists to a great extent among the very numerous Polish industrial workmen in the West. While the Poles thought it shameful to sell land to the Germans, Germans unfortunately often did not object to selling German landed property to the Poles

## Land Colonisation

for a high price. I certainly succeeded, after replenishing the Settlement Fund in the year 1902, in furthering the work of colonisation to a very appreciable extent. Land for the purpose of settlement was acquired as follows: 22,007 hectares in the year 1902; 42,052 hectares in 1903; 33,108 hectares in 1904; 34,661 hectares in 1905; 29,671 hectares in 1906; and after a grant of fresh funds in 1908, 14,093 hectares in that year; 21,093 hectares in 1909.

But it grew more and more difficult to acquire estates from Polish landowners, as the Poles held fast to their land, and the activities of the Settlement Commission on the one hand, and the Polish policy of parcelling out their properties on the other, resulted in land speculation which sent up the price of estates enormously. If the work of colonisation, undertaken at such sacrifice and at the cost of such a hard struggle, was not to be doomed to ultimate failure, an idea had to be put into practice which Bismarck had expressed already in 1886, and which was discussed over and over again subsequently: the idea of dispossession. [The Bill of 1908 gave the State the right to acquire land for colonisation by means of dispossession; it] was the logical conclusion of the policy of colonisation begun in 1886.

The struggle for the land, which in its essentials is a struggle to permeate the eastern districts with a sufficient number of Germans, will always be the alpha and omega of our national German policy in the East. This must be supported by the struggle for German culture and education, and, above all, for the German language. We certainly do not wish to deprive the

## **Imperial Germany**

Pole of his mother tongue, but we must try to bring it to pass that, by means of the German language, he comes to understand the German spirit. In our policy of settlement we fight for German nationality in the East; in our policy with regard to the schools we are really fighting for [the Poles whom we wish to bring into closer contact with German intellectual life.] Here, again, we cannot proceed without severity, and this will increase or be mitigated as the Poles increase or diminish their opposition. The foundation of the German Technical Hochschule, or College, in the year 1904, and before that, of the Imperial Academy in Posen, in 1903, created, in the eastern districts, centres of German intellectual life which, let us hope, will gradually prove their powers of attracting students.

Prussian policy in the Eastern Marches has never lacked violent critics, especially on the German side. The seemingly conclusive argument of these critics is the statement that our policy in the Eastern Marches has led to no palpable results, since after nearly twenty years of the policy of colonisation there is no appreciable change in the percentage of Germans and Poles in the population of the Eastern Marches. As an increase in the percentage of Germans was what Bismarck aimed at, our policy and, in particular, the work of colonisation must be considered to have failed. It is quite true that we have not nearly reached the goal of our policy in the Eastern Marches. Only if we pursue the course laid down by Frederick the Great, and later again adopted by Bismarck, not with small-minded chicanery, nor with clumsy brutality, but with determination, and, above all, consistently, can we hope,

## A Prime Requisite

after a very considerable lapse of time, to fulfil our national task in the East of Germany.

What we need most of all in our Eastern Marches is steadfastness. When I was visiting Posen in 1902, the head of the Provincial Administration, von Staudy, for many years a Conservative member of the Reichstag, with whom I was staying, said to me at the conclusion of a long conversation about affairs in the Eastern Marches: "And now one thing more: steadfastness! That is what everything depends on here. Nothing has done us so much harm as our vacillation, the fact that we gave in again and again. Now we must hold out!"

The work of German colonisation in the Eastern Marches, begun a thousand years ago, suspended for four centuries, and taken up anew less than thirty years ago, cannot be completed in a short time. This is not like an ordinary political action, which is soon followed by success or failure; we are in the midst of a great historical evolution in which generation after generation will have to co-operate. If from this mighty point of view we regard our national work in the East as a stage of evolution, then we may say that success has not been denied us. In the years from 1886 to 1911, 394,398 hectares of land were acquired by the Government to provide for the settlement of German peasants; of these 112,116 hectares were formerly owned by Poles. On the settlement estates there are 150,000 Germans; 450 new villages have been built, and in 300 villages the number of Germans has been increased. The successes due to our policy of colonisation were convincingly stated by one of the

## **Imperial Germany**

most estimable statesmen of our time, Count Botho Eulenburg, in 1908, in the debate in the Upper Chamber on the Bill of Dispossession. As the last census shows, the decrease of the Germans as compared with the Poles has ceased, in spite of the higher birth-rate among the latter. [Since the beginning of the century when the policy of colonisation began to be more vigorously pursued, the Germans have increased proportionately more than the Poles.] These are results of palpable value, these are the first steady steps towards the still distant goal, which, however, can be attained, if we do not tire of this troublesome struggle entailing so many sacrifices, and if transitory phases of practical politics do not again sweep the great and permanent demands of national policy into the background.

We must also not deceive ourselves on the point that the German, in a struggle between nationalities, does not yet always possess the desirable power of resistance, and that only too often he runs the risk in such a struggle of losing his nationality, if the State does not protect and support him. One of the chief difficulties of the problem in the Eastern Marches, and at the same time perhaps the strongest proof of the absolute necessity of a steadfast and strong policy there, lies in the need to strengthen the backbone of the German who, for reasons connected with our good and with our less good qualities, is so prone to be assimilated. So far as this is concerned, the Government must take things as they are. [As I said in the Reichstag on December 10, 1901, in my first speech on the Eastern Marches,] it is its duty to see that the Germans and their nationality do not succumb in the East.

## A Danger Averted

However, the answer to the question as to what the state of affairs in the East of Germany would have been, had nothing been done for the protection and strengthening of German nationality there, affords a far better means of judging what has been accomplished than does an enumeration of positive achievements. Before we could think of making national conquests in the East, our national possessions had to be protected from loss. And we succeeded in so doing because we fought for them. The development which Bismarck thwarted was tending slowly but surely to make the Eastern domain Polish. To have warded off a danger which threatened, is often in politics a greater success than to achieve a momentary advantage.

If the attempt to extend Polish nationality had not been met by the Government with a determined effort to extend German nationality, things in Posen and West Prussia to-day would have been much the same as in Galicia. It is quite comprehensible that the Austrian monarchy, which is not a State based on a foundation of one nationality, has, for reasons of home and foreign policy, renounced all further attempts to Germanise the Crown land of Galicia since the 'seventies, and has responded in the most lavish manner to Polish wishes, [so that Galicia to-day is a completely Slavonic country.] Prussia is the support of the German Empire and of the national idea, is the German national State, *κατ' εξοχήν* [and must not be false to her national mission.]

Prussia must be ruled and administered from the national German standpoint. If we had allowed the

## **Imperial Germany**

Slavonic element in the East of the Prussian Kingdom to extend and flood the German element, as has happened in part of Cisleithania, instead of having a hard fight for German nationality in the Eastern Marches to-day, we should have had a fight to maintain the unity of the Prussian State; we should not have had a Polish problem, we should have had a Polish danger.

Our policy in the Eastern Marches is a national duty which the German nation owes to itself. A highly cultured and strong nation may not, without a struggle, give up national possessions, once they have been acquired; it must have such belief in the power of its national culture, and such faith in its own strength, that it feels itself capable of, and justified in, enriching them. Whether we hold fast to our possessions in the East or not, whether our policy in the Eastern Marches continues in its national course, what is to become of our Eastern Marches—these are not questions of party politics, but of general national importance; and not only the fate of the Germans in the East of Prussia, but the future of Prussia and of the Empire, nay, of the whole German nation, depend on whether these questions are answered in the affirmative or in the negative. [I still consider the problem of the Eastern Marches one of our most important political problems, no matter what changes result from the world war on the eastern frontiers, and beyond the present frontiers, of the Prussian State.]

## CHAPTER XIX

### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF GERMANY

SELDOM, if ever, has a country experienced such a tremendous economic development in such a short time, as the German Empire in the period from the Peace of Frankfurt to the outbreak of the world war. The consolidation of Germany's position as a Great Power of Europe, with the resultant union of the German States and safeguarding of the German frontiers, and the entry into the realm of world-policy accompanied by the construction of a strong fleet: these two significant political events of our modern history most directly benefited the development of our industrial life.

During more than forty years of peace the German spirit of enterprise awoke for the first time since the end of the Middle Ages, and was able to make use of the rapid spread of means of communication, the achievements of technical science and skill, the great development of the modern circulation of money, to work for the increase of German prosperity. The poor German country has become a rich country. [The ease with which Germany raised enormous sums for the war loans proved her possession of an amount of capital which not only filled foreign countries with envious astonishment, but also surprised us at first. We only learnt in war how rich we had grown in peace.] The nation of thinkers, poets and soldiers has become a nation

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of merchants and shopkeepers of the first rank. Where are the times when Schiller saw only two nations struggling for the possession of the world—the Frank, who throws his iron sword into the scale of justice, and the Briton, who sends forth his mercantile fleet like the arms of a polypus—when he transported the German, who had lingered in the realm of dreams while the earth was divided up, together with the poor poet, into the heaven of idealistic simplicity?

Before the war German industry had its customers even in the remotest corners of the earth. The German merchant flag was a familiar sight in foreign ports, and knew that it was protected by the German navy. German capital was employed abroad together with that of the old financial Powers, England and France, and contributed to the consolidation of the industrial ties between us and other nations. The consequences of our national regeneration have hitherto been most apparent in the sphere of the world's industries. In the statistics of international traffic and commerce the rise of the German Empire beside the old Powers was most plastically expressed.

We have reason to be proud of our mighty industrial successes. [Working power, organisation and method are the mighty corner-stones of the gigantic edifice of German economic life, three truly German qualifications which no one possesses in such a high degree, for they are due to the personal sense of duty, so much more developed amongst us than elsewhere, to specifically German conscientiousness, to German thoroughness, and to the scientific education of the German.] And the satisfaction of the German patriot

## Rapid Industrial Growth

is justified, if he points out in what an extraordinarily short space of time we Germans in our economic development have covered the ground which half a century ago separated us from nations that we have now outstripped.

Such success is only possible to the exuberant vitality of a nation thoroughly sound, strong of will and full of ambition. But we must not conceal from ourselves the fact that the almost furious speed of our industrial ascent often hindered calm organic development, and created discords which demanded adjustment. On account of striking successes, due to a special talent, men are prone to neglect the harmonious development of other abilities and powers. At times they may have to pay for such one-sidedness by a painful set-back, if altered circumstances demand other powers and achievements.

In Germany the rapid economic development produced a speedy blossoming of industry and commerce under the sun of happy circumstances. The perfected means of communication opened to us, in a very different manner from what was possible before, the markets of even the remotest countries. The treasures of our home soil had been left untouched, the incomparable progress in mechanical and electrical engineering placed at our disposal new industrial machinery, and the quick growth of our population provided the masses of workmen for the foundation and expansion of great industrial undertakings. In addition to this, forty years of peace afforded an opportunity for working the world's markets in every direction. The commercial and industrial talent of the German nation,

## Imperial Germany

which once before, centuries ago, had made us the first commercial and trading nation of the world, and which, owing to the atrophy of our State and a hard national struggle for existence had been held in abeyance till the last years of the nineteenth century, was extraordinarily favoured by circumstances. When employers and princely merchants like Stumm and Krupp, Ballin and Rathenau, Kirdorf and Borsig, Gwinner and Siemens were found to take advantage of these favourable conditions, the successes of the immediate future were bound to fall to industry and commerce.

The German nation, therefore, turned more and more toward the new prospects opening before it. The lower classes deserted the land and flowed in a stream into industrial undertakings. The middle and upper classes of the commonalty provided a large number of capable industrial officials.

The industrialisation which had given signs of growth in the middle of the nineteenth century, was accomplished in Germany after the founding of the Empire, and especially after the end of the 'eighties, with a vehemence which has only been equalled in the United States. In the year 1882, agriculture still employed almost as many men as commerce and industry together; in the year 1895 the number of its employees was less by almost 2,000,000 than those of industry alone. In thirteen years a complete change of conditions had eventuated.

The economic legislation of the Empire had to take into account two possibilities of this fundamental change. It might have given all its support to industry and commerce, anyway favoured by circumstances and

## Tariff Laws of 1902

developing with strength and ease; it might have strengthened what seemed strongest, have led Germany towards a transformation into a purely commercial and industrial State, and have left German agriculture to its fate. Count Caprivi and his colleagues thought they ought to pursue this course. On the other hand, compensation for unfavourable circumstances might be given to agriculture by means of legislation, and the transformation of Germany into a one-sided industrial State might be opposed, and agriculture might be maintained, strong and vigorous, side by side with flourishing industry.

I embarked on this latter course with full knowledge of what I was doing, and with absolute conviction, when I introduced the Tariff Laws of 1902; for I was persuaded that vigorous agriculture is necessary for us from the economic, but, above all, from the national and social points of view, just because the industrialisation of Germany continues to progress steadily.

I have always been of opinion that more can be learnt from personal intercourse and from life than from books, however profound. I incline to think that one learns most in conversation with people holding different views which they know how to defend. "*Du choc des opinions jaillit la vérité.*" When, years ago, I conversed with a Liberal of the Left about economic problems, I asked him at last: "And do you think that at a pinch, if there were a terrible war or a serious revolution, even with all their gifts and their capabilities, and, of course, with a full claim to the same treatment, commerce and industry, our splendid

## Imperial Germany

new classes can, in the hour of danger, completely take the place of those forces which made Prussia great?" My political antagonist and personal friend considered for a short time and then said: "You are right; preserve our agriculture for us, and even our Junker." [I should like to add to this remark, which was made fourteen years ago, the utterance of another deputy who holds the same political views, and who said to me in the eleventh month of the war: "Thank God that our opposition to your Tariff Bill at that time was unsuccessful. What would have become of us without well developed and productive agriculture?"]

We owe much to industry and commerce. They have made our land wealthy, and enable us, above all, financially to support our armaments on land and at sea. A distinguished man in German economic circles, Prince Guido Henckel, used to say agriculture must provide our soldiers and industry must pay for them.

Industry and commerce, these two new lines of business, feed and employ the great increase in our population, which we lost formerly by emigration. We rose to the height of a World Power on the shoulders of commerce and industry. But the gains of our national development in one direction have often been paid for by losses in the other. To estimate the real profit of German industrialisation, the losses and damage caused by it must be included in the calculation. It is soon seen, then, that the course of modern economic life imposes other and harder duties on us than the task of continually forcing on with all our might the growth of commerce and industry.

Modern development has great dangers for national

## Agricultural Considerations

life, and only if we succeeded in removing these could we rejoice with a clear conscience in the new achievements. We had to proceed like a clever doctor, who takes care to maintain all the parts and functions of the body in a strong and healthy condition, and who takes measures in good time, if he sees that the excessive development of one single organ weakens the others. German industry, as a matter of fact, grew strong at the expense of agriculture during the first decade of its development. If nothing were done, agriculture threatened to fall under the hammers of industry and be crushed. But that did not mean an injury to agriculture alone; it meant, too, a loss for the nation. Our agricultural forces that react on our national life are too valuable and too indispensable for us ever to be able to cease from caring with all our might for the weal or woe of German agriculture. The economic life of a nation is not like a business house with many branches, which are of more or less interest to it according to their chances of profit at the time.

[England is learning that lesson now. Lord Selborne, the English Minister of Agriculture,<sup>1</sup> declared the other day at a public meeting, that Disraeli, the leader of the English Conservatives, was right after all, when he said after the victory of the Anti-Corn Law League, just seventy years ago, that Free Trade would be the ruin of agriculture. The triumph of Cobden and Bright had been but ephemeral. The world war had shown what an increase of power it meant for a country to be able to feed its population itself. England had

<sup>1</sup> Since resigned, June, 1916.

## Imperial Germany

now learnt to value the great importance of the rural population. After the war the attitude of Parliament to agricultural questions would have to undergo a radical change. Agricultural questions would in future have to be regarded from the point of view of the safety of the nation and of national defence; in all questions regarding agriculture England would have to make a fresh start.]

Apart from the fact that agriculture as a producer and as a consumer stands on a level of absolute equality with industry, other than purely economic points of view must be considered in estimating the economic strength of a nation. The political economy of a nation has not only an economic but also a national significance. It is not merely a question of the material gain due to the different kinds of work. It also depends on how the various occupations react on the maintenance and growth of the physical and ideal forces of the nation. Certainly a nation stands in need of increasing its wealth, its financial power to live. States in our days need this more than in former times. Modern government, with its enormous sphere of action, and, above all, modern armaments, demand very different material means than was the case formerly. But by material means alone a nation can neither maintain its place in the world nor advance it. Physical, moral and mental health are still the greatest national riches.

Prussia proved gloriously in the Seven Years' War and in the War of Liberation what a nation, poor but healthy in body and mind, can achieve; whereas superior wealth has never been able to prevent the

## Shaping a Course

disastrous consequences of diminishing strength in a nation. ["Woe to the nation whose wealth increases while the people deteriorate." At the centenary celebration at Dennewitz, before the statue of the victor in that battle, I recalled this pregnant saying, in view of much that has been unsatisfactory in the last years. If there is one thing which fills me with joy, it is that in this war I see that our nation, while its material prosperity has increased, has verily not sunk morally, but has given glorious proof of moral greatness and unbroken strength. We must strive with all the more vigour after the war to maintain this equilibrium.]

A State is not a commercial company. In the rivalry of the nations of the earth industrial strength is of very considerable importance, but great and decisive events ultimately depend on quite other forces, and are not fought out in the field of industry. The truism, that wealth alone does not bring happiness, applies to nations as much as to individuals. Nations also can only enjoy increased wealth if they have a sound mind in a sound body. The Government, in its economic decisions, must not, like a clever speculative merchant, shape its course according to favourable circumstances which offer a brilliant prospect to one sphere of industry or another; it must subordinate its economic policy to national policy as a whole, must act so that not only the present industrial welfare of the nation is increased, but that, above all, the future sound development of the nation is ensured.

The question which political economy has often asked itself : "How does a nation get rich, so as to be able to live well?" must be supplemented for economic

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policy by the other question : "How does a nation keep healthy, so as to be able to live long?" Industry and commerce increase our national wealth to a greater degree and with greater speed than agriculture was ever able to do. But, without great and flourishing agriculture by its side, industry would soon use up the best forces of the nation, and would never be able to replace them. Agriculture is the mother of the nation's strength which industry employs, the broad acres in which the trees of industry and commerce stand, and from which they derive their nourishment.

We rightly admire in the industrial centres of the Rhineland, Westphalia and Saxony the keenness, the energy and the organising talent of the employers. In the perfection of the industrial machinery we admire the powers of invention and the audacity of our technical men and engineers. We find cause for admiration, too, in the quality of the industrial products, due to the diligence and conscientiousness of the German workman. We are rightly proud of the flourishing state of our great and middle-sized towns, which owe their quick development to the rise of industry and commerce.

Since the end of the Middle Ages we had experienced no development of cities on a large scale. And it is not fair to condemn the culture of the modern large towns without qualification, for, as in the Middle Ages, the many greater and more populous cities of modern times are centres of intellectual and artistic life. Among the influences which emanate from the large towns and penetrate into the country there are certainly some that have a pernicious effect on the habits

## Dangers of Industrialisation

of life of the country. But these injuries are often counterbalanced by the renewal and the refinement, of external culture which nowadays, as always, originate in the large towns. Just the man who sees the great dangers of an exaggerated development of the towns in our country must appreciate the very considerable achievements of our great cities in the spheres of intellect and culture, and must separate the wheat from the chaff.

It is not right either to seek the defects of our highly developed great towns too exclusively in the ethical domain. There is sin *intra* and *extra muros*. The just and the unjust are to be found in the country as well as in the towns. We must also not forget that particularly in the sphere of charity the towns have led the way with model institutions, and that in making provision for the lower classes the great employers of labour have done pioneer work. [The towns, too, have played a very considerable part in solving the excessively difficult economic problems which the world war has brought with it, for it is not only a war of weapons, but also one of industry.]

The dangers of the industrialisation and the consequent "townification" of Germany do not lie so much in the spheres of intellect and moral life, so difficult to gauge and to estimate, but in the physical conditions. The health of the men and the fertility of the women suffer greatly under the influence of life in towns, and especially in large towns. For the years 1876-80 in the kingdom of Prussia the yearly average of living children born to women up to the age of forty-five was 160 per thousand in the towns and 182 per

## Imperial Germany

thousand in the country. For the years 1906-10 the numbers had fallen to 117 in the towns and 168 in the country. That means a loss of forty-three births per thousand women in the towns. In the municipal district of Berlin alone the numbers had fallen in the same space of time from 149 to 84, a loss of sixty-five.

The rapid increase in the town populations does not connote an increase in the national population, but a steady decrease, for the women who migrate from the country to the towns and the women who grow up in the towns effect a decrease in the birth-rate of the Empire.

It is the same with the health of the men, as tested by their fitness for military service. According to the statistics compiled on the basis of the inquiry made by a Commission which I appointed in 1906, the country districts, i.e. communities of less than 2,000 inhabitants, furnished 114 men who passed the military test, the big towns of more than 100,000 inhabitants 65, the middle-sized towns of 20,000 to 100,000 inhabitants 83 per 100 men due as calculated on the basis of the total population. [Before the war in East Prussia 67.18 per cent. of those liable for military service were fit, in Berlin only 32 per cent., in the whole of Germany on an average 53.55 per cent.] Of the parents of those fit for service, 74.97 per cent. came from the country, 1.68 per cent. from the large towns. And Germany has fifty-two towns with more than 100,000 inhabitants, France only fifteen, Italy thirteen, Austro-Hungary nine. Almost two-thirds of our population live in the towns and industrial centres. In the year 1850 agriculture employed 65 per cent.; in 1870, 47 per cent.;

## Significance of Agriculture

in 1895, 35.8 per cent.; and in 1907 only 28.6 per cent. of the total population.

These figures are of very serious import. They show that every weakening of agriculture means a weakening of our power of defence, a diminution in our national strength and safety. Commerce and industry have only flourished so because peace has been preserved by the strength of our armaments for almost half a century, and they will only be able to continue to thrive in the future if the protection of our armaments is maintained in undiminished strength.

That requisite, however, demands a strong and numerous rural population, who can find in highly developed agricultural industry sufficient work to earn their livelihood. Commerce and industry for their own sake must be deeply interested in the prosperity of agriculture. As the statistics show, in future even more than was the case since the end of the 'nineties, the task of protecting trade and property in the Empire will fall to the rural population.

A Liberal savant, an old friend of mine, said to me some years ago in Norderney, as he watched the ships which passed my house, that he could not understand how I, otherwise a sensible man, could have given our industrial policy such an agrarian tendency by means of the tariff. I pointed to a ship that was just passing, and said: "A ship without sufficient ballast, with too high a mast, and too heavily rigged, will turn turtle. Agriculture is our ballast. Commerce and industry are to be our mast and sails. The ship cannot advance without them. But without ballast she will capsize."

The captain of a ship must certainly try to make

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good headway. But he must not acquire speed at the expense of safety. If the ship of our Empire is to pursue her proud course with speed and safety, then the navigators must see that agriculture weighs heavy in the hull of the ship.

The protection of agriculture is a national duty of great importance—a duty which would have to be fulfilled, even if agriculture were of far less economic value than is actually the case. Although agriculture no longer occupies the paramount position in industrial life that it did formerly, yet it holds its own among the other branches of trade. It is true that according to the census of 1907 only 17,680,000 inhabitants are occupied in agriculture as opposed to nearly 26,380,000 in industry; but the value of its produce is equal to that of the produce of industry, or even surpasses it.

Statistics on the subject do not supply sufficient data, and therefore the question whether agriculture or industry is more profitable cannot be answered definitely in favour of one or the other. Many a townsman, however, will be surprised to learn that the yield of one agricultural product alone, namely, milk, was 2,600 million marks in the year 1906, while the yield of all the mines in the same year only amounted to 1,600 million marks. The estimates formed by agriculturists and by industrialists as to the total value of agricultural and industrial products are not in agreement.

But whether, as regards the yield, agriculture or industry stands first, that is really of little or no importance; we need them both, and the downfall of one could never find full compensation in the rise of the other. To estimate the real economic value of the

## The Foreign Market

products it would be necessary to ascertain also in what manner agriculture and industry react on the stimulation and on the money-making powers of commerce. And even then one would still have to take into consideration that the value of the yield is influenced by the fluctuation of prices in the world's markets. These questions are of more interest from the point of view of the scientific investigation of economic life than from that of the practical political treatment of economic forces.

Industrial goods are disposed of in the foreign market, on the Continent and overseas, and in the home market in Germany itself. The development of our railway systems, our natural waterways, our canals, and the oversea traffic growing ever greater under the protection of the German navy, have brought the foreign market within easier reach. Industry has need of the foreign market in order to maintain its present development, to extend it and to provide millions of workmen with sufficiently profitable work.

For this reason it is the duty of economic policy to conclude favourable commercial treaties of long duration in order to keep the foreign market open. But, all the same, the home market is also of very great importance. [And, as this war has clearly proved, it is called upon to replace the foreign market, if in time of war our frontiers are wholly or partly closed.] But in the home market, agriculture is by far the most important customer of industry; unless agriculture is able to buy, unless it earns enough itself to enable others to earn too, it will not be able, in critical times, to consume a part of the products which cannot be disposed of

## Imperial Germany

abroad. The old proverb, "If the peasant has money then everyone else has too," is literally true, as soon as industry is forced, to a greater extent than is necessary in times of peace, to find customers at home.

A policy which only considers the demands, moods and chances of the moment, which only does that which at the time is easiest to do, which only works *ad hoc*, without thought for future results, cannot claim any merit. *Gouverner, c'est prévoir.* Not even the best considered policy can include every future contingency in its calculations.

But every one of our actions and of our decisions is the cause of future effects, and it may well be expected of a statesman that he foresee at least a part of the possible results of his policy.

Above all there are certain contingencies which must be reckoned with, because they have occurred again and again, at greater or lesser intervals, in the past, and come under the category of indestructible elements of the world's history. War is such a contingency and must be reckoned with in every statesman's calculations. No sensible man desires it. Every conscientious Government seeks to avoid it so long as the honour and vital interests of the nation permit of so doing. But every State department should be organised as if war were going to break out to-morrow. This applies to economic policy as well.

[Before the war I pointed out in this connection that] owing to the sense of security induced by a long period of peaceful prosperity, we were more inclined than was good for us to make our arrangements, especially with regard to economic matters, as if this peace would be

## The Dream of Peace

permanent. Even if we had not been threatened with war during the last decades we must realise that there is no such thing as permanent peace, and must remember Moltke's words : "Permanent peace is a dream, and not even a beautiful one. But war is an essential element of God's scheme of the world."

There was no part of public or private life, I added, that would be untouched by war. But the effects of war would be most directly felt and most palpable in economic matters. The results of a war, be it successful or unsuccessful, would put in the shade the results of even the most serious economic crisis. Economic policy must foster peaceful development; but it must keep in view the possibility of war, and, for this reason above all, must be agrarian in the best sense of the word.

## CHAPTER XX

### THE VITAL IMPORTANCE OF AGRICULTURE

IN time of war the productive power of agriculture is a vital question for the whole nation. Those parties and groups representing certain economic interests which demanded that the Government should place a very small duty on agricultural products from abroad, or even let them in duty free, so that the price of comestibles, under the pressure of foreign competition, might be kept low, and thus the industrial workman's expenses of living reduced, wanted to base all economic policy on an imaginary permanent peace.

Our agriculture, which has to compete, so far as wages are concerned, with the high wages paid by industrial concerns, which has to employ the most modern and expensive machinery in order to pursue intensive culture on soil that has been tilled for centuries, is absolutely unable to produce at the same price as the large, young agricultural countries, which work virgin soil and pay small wages.

Our agriculture needs a protective tariff. Imported agricultural products must have a sufficiently heavy duty imposed on them to prevent the foreign supply from falling below a price at which our home agriculture can make a fair profit. The reduction of agrarian duties at the time of Caprivi's commercial policy brought about a crisis in our agriculture which it was

## England's Position

only able to weather by dint of working with stubborn energy, and in the hope that there would soon be a more favourable arrangement of our tariffs. If we had sacrificed the protective tariff on agricultural products in order to lower the cost of living by means of cheap imports, the danger would have arisen that agricultural work would grow more and more unprofitable, and would have had to be given up to a greater and greater extent. We should have gone the way England has gone.

During the last winter of my tenure of office, I once explained to an English statesman how utterly unfounded and even nonsensical was the English fear of a German attack, let alone a German invasion. Whereupon he replied : "All you say is right, and, so far as I am personally concerned, you tell me nothing new. But with regard to English public opinion and the man in the street, you must not forget that England's position is very different from that of the Continental Powers. France suffered a terrible defeat, but a few years after Gravelotte and Sedan she had recovered so far that it was possible to contemplate 'war in sight.' Almost as quickly Austria got over the effects of 1859 and 1866. After the Japanese War, in spite of serious defeats on land and at sea, and of a grave revolution, Russia's favour did not cease to be courted on more than one side. England is different. Eighty per cent. of our population lives in towns. Our agriculture is unable to produce more than a fifth of the wheat and a half of the meat consumed in England. If our navy were defeated, and England were cut off from foreign trade, within a very few weeks we should be reduced

## **Imperial Germany**

to the choice between starvation and anarchy on the one hand and an unconditional peace on the other."

Countries where agriculture flourishes, countries where at least a majority of the population is engaged in tilling the soil, where agriculture supplies the home market in part, and provides a large portion of the necessary foodstuffs, have greater powers of resistance in critical times, and recover far more easily after such, than countries that are dependent entirely on commerce and industry. Carthage experienced that as opposed to Rome. Even the highest industrial wages are of no avail if the workman can buy no food in the country with his money.

And this state of affairs can arise if, in time of war, the frontiers are wholly or largely closed, and home agriculture is not in a position to provide a sufficient amount of foodstuffs. What we might have gained in peace, and for the moment, by surrendering our agriculture to foreign competition, we should ultimately have had to pay for in war with misery, hunger and their fatal consequences to the State and society. [Nothing could more strikingly prove the correctness of the economic policy initiated by the Tariff Law of 1902 than the economic experiences of the world war. Owing to military events on the land frontiers Germany was deprived of all imports, and she was cut off from all oversea connections by England's superior sea power; thus from the beginning of the war the German Empire was forced into that economic isolation which England feared, and always must fear for herself, in case of a defeat at sea.

Germany, however, was spared the catastrophe which

## Stimulation of Agriculture

would overtake England, and that by the productiveness of German agriculture. Certainly not without difficulty, but nevertheless with complete success, since the beginning of the war German agriculture has solved the mighty problem of feeding the whole German civil population, the millions of German soldiers and the millions of prisoners of war with the products of German husbandry and cattle breeding. This tremendous achievement is mainly rendered possible by the unparalleled development of intensive culture in Germany. Although in the course of the last decades the acreage under culture has increased very slightly, and although it has become more and more difficult to obtain agricultural labour, German agriculture has nevertheless steadily increased its production, so that to-day it may justly claim to be the most productive and efficient in the world.

Agriculturists, however, could only be stimulated to the effort of getting the utmost out of the soil, and the best out of the stock, if they had the assurance that with an increase in productiveness there would be a corresponding increase in profit. They did not have this assurance during the time of the Caprivi-Marschall economic policy, but they obtained it by means of the Tariff Laws of 1902. The tariff of 1902 is assuredly one of the essential promises for victory in this war. It meant the reorganisation of Germany's national economic powers of resistance, powers which have wrecked the attempt to wage an economic war against Germany.]

It is the duty of the State to look after the welfare of all classes of workers and the people in general. It

## Imperial Germany

must not allow an industry of economic importance, like agriculture, which is indispensable to the nation, to suffer in order that other branches of industry may thrive the more easily and quickly. The State must grant its aid in proportion to individual needs, and must make the nation in general share the necessary burdens.

As it is right that the working classes should receive direct grants from the Imperial exchequer, so it is right that the existence of agriculture should be indirectly assured by means of the tariff. Both are a *nobile officium* of the State. It is just as misleading to speak of favouritism in regard to agriculture because of the policy of protective duties, as it would be to speak of favouritism towards the working classes because of our social policy.

True justice on the part of the State does not lie in granting or refusing the same thing to each class, each trade, or each citizen, so that there may be no external differences; that would only be mechanical justice. Real justice lies in giving to each, as far as is possible, what he most needs. This is the justice I meant when, two months before the introduction of the Tariff Bill, at a dinner on September 21, 1901, given me at Flottbeck, my birthplace, by the provincial diet of Pinneberg, I defined the economic policy of His Majesty's Government as one that desired to give to each what he required, true to the old motto of the Hohenzollern, "*Suum cuique.*"

Our tariff policy has to fulfil a double purpose. It must, on the one hand, by means of sufficient protection, maintain home products in agriculture and

## A Protective Tariff

industry in a position to compete with foreign goods. On the other hand, by means of commercial treaties of long duration, it must keep the foreign markets open to our industrial exports and foreign trade.

In order to accomplish this first task we had to surround ourselves with a barrier of duties; in order to do justice to the second we had to arrange our protective tariff in such a way as not to make it impossible for other countries to conclude commercial treaties with us on terms which are more or less acceptable to them. Commercial treaties are like mercantile business contracts. Both parties ask more than they expect to get ultimately, and gradually reduce their demands, until, on the basis of some middle course, the business is concluded. Both parties try to obtain the greatest possible advantages at the smallest possible cost. The salient point for the State is this, to see that no important economic interests are sacrificed. A middle course must be found between protective tariffs and commercial policy by means of which agriculture, commerce and industry can progress equably and side by side.

Owing to a momentary standstill in exports the Caprivi-Marschall Tariff Policy was directed entirely towards commercial treaties. In order to be able to conclude favourable commercial treaties as easily and rapidly as possible, foreign countries were offered a reduction in the duty on corn. But the opinion of clever business men, that the demands of the other parties increase in proportion as they are offered more, proved to be right in the end. The important commercial treaty with Russia, who derived great advan-

## **Imperial Germany**

tages from the reduction in the duties on cereals, was only concluded after negotiations which lasted three full years and were interrupted by a tariff war.

Agriculture had to pay for the commercial treaties, since it had for the space of twelve years to work under considerably less favourable conditions, owing to the reduction in the corn tax from 5 to 3½ marks. That was, as Bismarck expressed it at the time, a leap in the dark.

The commercial treaties themselves, of course, had a very stimulating effect on trade. But this was at the expense of a great industrial class, indissolubly bound up with the economic welfare of the whole nation and with our great national traditions; this class, feeling slighted, fell into a condition of violent unrest and excitement.

It cannot be denied that, owing to an economic policy that, by injuring one class of industry, favoured the others, the economic differences in the nation were intensified. Up to the beginning of the 'nineties agriculture had on the whole advanced hand in hand with the other industries. Now it assumed a defensive position, formed the Association of Farmers in 1893, a very strong organisation which, in common with all societies representing economic interests, gradually grew more and more intemperate in its tone. The belief that commerce and export industries gain, if agriculture loses, has its origin in the early 'nineties. This mistake introduced a factor of dissension and unrest into our home politics, which has often acted in a disturbing manner, calculated to hinder development.

It was the task of the new century to find a just

## An Agrarian Foundation

compromise in economic policy, in the interests of agriculture. This was necessary, not only for reasons of State justice, but, above all, because it became clear that the belief that agriculture could prosper in spite of the tariff reductions had not been justified. Therefore, in the year 1901, I introduced the new Tariff Bill, on the basis of which new commercial treaties were to be concluded which should consider the legitimate interests of agriculture. By placing our commercial policy on an agrarian foundation, we gave added strength to the economic life of the nation. But the change to agrarian policy must not be accomplished in such a way as to be a hindrance or, what would be worse, a set-back to the development of commerce; i.e. the new tariff must make it possible to conclude favourable commercial treaties of long duration.

The "middle course" that I gave out as a watch-word before the tariff fight, was thus clearly indicated. If the whole enterprise was not to come to grief it was necessary to be moderate on the agrarian side as well. In the preamble to the Government's Bill it was said: "Germany's future commercial policy will have to be founded on the principle that measures in favour of export industry must not lead to a reduction in the protective duties which are indispensable to agriculture. On the other hand, export industries will be entitled to expect that consideration of agriculture, at their expense, shall not go beyond what is absolutely needful." This problem was set us by the tariff laws, and in the course of long parliamentary battles, fought with almost unexampled obduracy, it was solved.

As soon as the new tariff rates were made known,

## **Imperial Germany**

the Free Trade Press declared that it would be impossible to conclude commercial treaties on the basis of this new tariff : the end of German commercial policy was said to be at hand. The extreme Agrarian papers were of the opinion, on their part, that the tariff would not satisfy even the most unpretentious farmers. The Socialist Press said : "Down with the extortionate tariff." The Government was attacked on both flanks and had to break through in the middle in order to carry its work, which was in the interests of the whole community and especially of agriculture, to a successful finish.

If two extreme views or demands are opposed to each other, then, in politics as in life, common sense and truth usually lie midway between them. Free trade democracy demanded that agriculture should be sacrificed to commercial policy. The Association of Farmers demanded that the prospect of commercial treaties should be sacrificed to agrarian policy. One was as impossible as the other. Only if the Government remained inflexible on the main points, if it did not allow itself to be dragged over by the opposition on the Right or on the Left, could it hope to see the parties, when they had moderated their demands, agree to the middle course which it had planned. The Social Democrats and Ultra-Liberal Association resorted to obstruction in order to make an objective discussion of the clauses of the Bill impossible, and so force a General Election. With praiseworthy impartiality, the deputy Eugen Richter, although he and his party friends were not in favour of the tariff proposals, protested in the name of the Ultra-Liberal People's party against this

## Tariff in the Reichstag

violence offered to the majority by the obstruction of the minority.

For a time it seemed as if it would be impossible to get a majority for the Tariff Bill, as part of the Right, on the principle of "everything or nothing," seemed inclined to refuse the whole tariff reform, undertaken in the interests of agriculture. It was greatly to the credit of the Chairman of the German Agricultural Council, Count Schwerin-Löwitz, of Count Kanitz, who unfortunately died in the prime of life, and, above all, of the leader of the Conservative party at that time, Count Limburg-Stirum, that they did not allow the Conservative party to embark on a wrong course. The deputy, Herr Bassermann, showed equally praiseworthy insight and power of resistance with regard to the free trade tendencies of a section of the Liberals. Thus Conservatives, National Liberals and the Centre, led with statesmanlike ability by Count Ballestrem and the deputy, Herr Spahn, met on the ground of the motion proposed by the free Conservative deputy, Herr von Kardorff.

Thanks to the Tariff Law of 1902, our economic policy regained that agrarian bias so indispensable to the interests of the whole community. Side by side with the foreign trade, advancing with such mighty strides, the maintenance of a strong home industry was secured.

German agriculture, under the influence of the new tariff and of the commercial treaties based on it, has experienced a decade of vigorous development. Our robust and hardworking farmers recovered the feeling that the Empire had an interest in the success of their

## Imperial Germany

work; that it no longer looked upon agriculture as an industrial stepchild, but as one having equal rights and, indeed, as the first-born of its mother Germania. The number of agricultural undertakings increased by nearly 180,000 between 1895 and 1907. The amount of live stock increased enormously, cattle by about 3,000,000 head, pigs by about 5,300,000, in the same space of time. The harvest of rye in 1913 was 12,200,000 tons<sup>1</sup> as against 6,600,000 in 1895; wheat, 4,650,000 tons, as against 2,800,000; barley, 3,670,000 tons, as against 2,400,000; oats, 9,700,000 tons, as against 5,200,000; potatoes, 54,100,000 tons, as against 31,700,000 tons. In 1900 we imported 16 per cent. of grain for bread from abroad, in 1906 only 10 per cent.

In comparison with the agriculture of other countries, ours has developed quite extraordinarily in the last decade. In the summer of 1902, not long before the second debate on the tariff, the historian of German agriculture, Dr. Freiherr von der Goltz, had to conclude the opening remarks of his work with the statement that, "owing to events in the sphere of national and international economics, German agriculture was passing through a critical period." To-day, qualified judges of agricultural conditions point proudly to the flourishing development, the growing value of the yield and the increased power of production (which is capable of still further increase) of German agriculture.

But the agricultural development has not taken place at the cost of the expansion of our industrial export trade or of our commerce. The free trade prophets,

<sup>1</sup> The German ton is not quite so much as the English, being equal to 2,205 lb. avoirdupois.

## Treaty with Russia

who in the debates of 1901 and 1902 prophesied that the agrarian trend of our economic policy would "restrict commerce," have proved wrong. Those who believed that it would not be possible to conclude favourable commercial treaties of long duration, on account of the increased agrarian duties, had underestimated Germany's economic importance in the world.

Germany, with the weapon of her new tariff in her hand, had by no means too little to offer other countries; in 1891 she had offered too much. When introducing the Caprivi-Marschall Tariff and Commercial Policy, the assumption had been made, amongst others, that the excess of our imports over our exports must force us to special concessions in order to open the foreign markets still further to us. As a matter of fact, the large amount of our imports, our ability to buy, was the strongest point in our position when concluding our commercial treaties. We could expect concessions because we are such excellent customers of foreign countries. We were able successfully to make use of the relation between our imports and our exports in the opposite sense to that employed at the beginning of the 'nineties.

The commercial treaty with Russia, round which a contest raged between 1891 and 1894, was concluded between Count Witte and myself with comparatively little difficulty in Norderney in July, 1904. The other commercial treaties followed, and in no case did the new tariff prove an insurmountable obstacle.

[At the decisive sitting of the Reichstag on December 13, 1902, probably the longest sitting the German Reichstag has ever held, I made an introductory speech,

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in which I explained the attitude of the governments of the Federated States toward the decisions reached by the Reichstag at the second reading; in conclusion, I expressed the conviction that the great work of Tariff Reform would prove a blessing for the Fatherland. This met with violent applause on the one hand and equally violent opposition on the other.

The hope I then expressed has been fulfilled, and not only with regard to agriculture. The telegram which the directors of the Hamburg-Amerika Line sent me on my retirement confirmed this, for they emphasised the fact that during my tenure of the Chancellorship there had been the most vigorous development and prosperity in industry, commerce and trade that Germany had ever seen.]

## CHAPTER XXI

### THE ECONOMIC FUTURE OF GERMANY

[OUR future economic development will largely depend on our maintaining the principles of commercial policy which made such progress possible, and on our preserving the security and advantages in commercial politics which we possessed before the war. And in forecasting the economic situation of our nation after the war, we must surely take into account, besides the two million German colonists in Russia, the pioneers of German trade who, before the war, in North and South America, in the Far East, in North and South Africa, in the whole of France and England, in the English Colonies, in all important centres of commerce in the world, had started and managed so many prosperous enterprises, and everywhere promoted the success of German work and of the German people.

In this direction we have been particularly hard hit by the war, not only in enemy lands but also in neutral countries. We must expect that it will be found possible to take up again the connections which were so suddenly broken by the world war, to compensate to some extent those who have suffered, and to repair part, if not all, of the damage.]

The rapid growth of general prosperity between the years 1904 and 1914 is quite obvious. Up to August 1, 1914, the number of persons employed in commerce

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and industry was continually on the increase, as was the number of large undertakings. To take one example from among many, the official statistics in the year 1911 report 4,712 commercial companies with a capital of 18,060 million marks, which pay yearly dividends to the amount of about 1,300 million. The large private banks have become a power, not only in the industrial world, but in the sphere of economic policy. German imports in general rose between 1903 and 1913 from 6,300 million marks to 11,600 million; exports, from 5,300 million to 10,900 million. And following the development of foreign trade, the German mercantile marine increased (in 1,000 gross registered tonnage) from 2,650 in 1900 to 4,267 in 1909, to 4,513 in 1911, and 5,238 in 1914. In the German shipyards the construction of ships, including river craft and warships, rose from 385 in 1900 to 814 in 1909, 859 in 1911, and to 936 in 1913. Since, at the same time, during the last decade, social provision has not only been further developed for the working classes, but has been extended to the middle classes, we may say that all classes engaged in trades and professions have maintained and developed their flourishing condition since our economic policy took an agrarian turn, while agriculture has been rescued from a critical condition, and has taken its place in the ranks of the general, thriving development of German industrial life.

From the economic point of view in particular the German nation has reason to be content with the result of their development during the last decade, and to hope that the courses on which they have embarked, and which have proved so profitable, will not be abandoned.

## Placating the Workman

The advantages gained by commerce and export through the inauguration of commercial policy at the beginning of the 'nineties have been maintained. The whole of German industry has been able uninterruptedly to enjoy the protection of the tariff granted in the year 1878. Individual defects of the Caprivi tariff were remedied in favour of industry by the tariff of 1902. Finally, German agriculture has acquired the necessary protective duties.

More has been done for the workmen in Germany than in any other country. When, a few years ago, a deputation of English Trades Unions made a circular tour through Germany, to study the conditions of our working classes, one of the Englishmen, after being made acquainted with our arrangements for the welfare of the working man, asked one of his German guides (a Social Democrat, by the way) in astonishment, "But why then do you go on agitating?"

If, in spite of everything, we have not achieved industrial peace; if [up to the war] the antagonism between different industrial classes continued to be violent; if, on the contrary, passion ran higher in the field of industry, and the quarrels and hatred between the various industrial classes were bitterer than ever, the cause did not lie in any defect or any lack of adjustment in our economic policy, but in the imperfection of our home politics.

Just as in purely political questions the German parties as a rule determined their attitude not by considerations of expediency, but by their hostility for the time being to one party or another, so they did to a far greater extent on questions of economic policy. Ger-

## **Imperial Germany**

many was probably the only country in which practical economic questions were weighed with scrupulous care in the party balance. With the single exception of the Centre, every party, great or small, had its own economic policy, or, at least, its own speciality in economic policy, to which economic questions were subordinated. That was part and parcel of party dogmatism. We had almost as many different conceptions of financial policy, agrarian policy, commercial policy, trade policy, social policy, tariff policy, taxing policy and other kinds of economic policy, as we had parties. The German party man got so wrapped up in the views of his party on economic questions that soon, by auto-suggestion, he came to consider these views as indissolubly bound up with his own trade interests and his own livelihood, and, so far as economic matters were concerned, carried on party warfare with a violence that is usually inspired by selfishness. We have no party that can say that it represents only one single form of industry; not even the Social Democrats can assert that of themselves.

Nevertheless, with the exception of the Centre [—whose supporters and representatives are drawn from all classes of the population and from every trade and profession—] every party has often carried on the struggle in economic politics more or less as if for each one it were a question of representing one particular interest. True, the Conservatives drew their support chiefly from landed property, the National Liberals from industry, and the Ultra-Liberals from commerce. That is due to the political traditions of the various classes. But if the parties developed more and more into representatives of the interests of special professions and trades, that

## Class Irreconcilability

involved great dangers with regard to economic, political and national questions.

If the different industrial classes confront each other as so many political parties, it will no longer be possible to dispose of questions of economic policy in such a manner as to profit all branches of industry. The different interests will become totally irreconcilable. Each class will see its own gain in the other's loss. And the industrial differences will, if the Government is not in strong hands, be decided, like party struggles for power, by beating the minority party by a majority vote, with a total disregard of the interests of whole industrial classes.

On the other hand, professional and industrial classes are rarely capable of deciding great national questions independently, with a view to the position of the Empire in the world, instead of to their own professional interest. And they are the less capable of this the more a national task involves material sacrifices. An amalgamation of the ideas of party politics with those of an industrial class constitutes an equally great danger for national and for industrial life.

[As the trying experiences of the war have given good ground for hope that party antagonism will gradually but steadily become less marked, and that party-political dogmatism will be moderated, so they have actually brought about the establishment of cordial relations between great economic associations that were bitterly hostile to one another before. Taking into consideration the international lessons to be learnt from the war and the future position of the German Empire in the world, our six great Industrial Associations have in

## **Imperial Germany**

praiseworthy manner joined forces on the subject of the most important problem of Germany's present and future, the problem of Germany's political and economic position in Europe and the world, as it will be determined by the war; and they have manifested unanimous and patriotic determination. That constitutes a grave warning to foreigners who are counting upon the old party and industrial dissensions in Germany. A brilliant prospect opens out for Germany's future home policy, the most urgent task of which will be the re-establishment of economic life after the war. If the Governments of the Empire and of the German States secure and keep the support of the productive classes in this work, which will be one of stupendous and undreamt-of difficulty, we may legitimately hope that at no distant date the progress of prosperous economic development, which this war has so suddenly cut short, will be resumed. Home policy in time of peace will have to fulfil no task consequent upon the war that is more important or more necessary for the happiness of the whole nation than this.]

## CHAPTER XXII

### CONCLUSION<sup>1</sup>

THE German Empire, such as it emerged from the baptism of fire of Königgrätz and Sedan, the belated fruit of the slow evolution of our nation, could not come into existence until German intellect and the Prussian monarchy joined forces. They were bound to join forces if a united German State of lasting power was to be achieved.

German history, eventful as it is, discloses an abundance of great and mighty deeds: the struggle of the German Emperors for the heritage of the Cæsars, German arms victorious on the shores of the Great Belt and the Mediterranean, in Asia Minor, and in the heart of what is now France; and after the intellectual refining process of the Reformation, the greatest development of artistic and scientific life that the world has known since the days of Hellas and the Cinquecento.

The result, however, of these glorious activities, as far as the State and politics are concerned, was the dissolution of all forms of government in the nineteenth century, and the fact that German power was outstripped by the younger States of Eastern and Western Europe. In a thousand years of work, from the point of view of culture, the highest had been accomplished, but politically, nothing had been achieved.

<sup>1</sup> Almost wholly new, see brackets.

## **Imperial Germany**

The Western and Southern domains of Germany, greatly favoured by Nature, accomplished indestructible work in the sphere of German intellectual life, but could not raise sufficient strength for the sterner business of creating a State.

We modern Germans do not share Treitschke's harsh opinion that the small German States were worthless. During the decades in which we have enjoyed union as an Empire, we have recovered a clear perception of the manifold blessings we owe to the small States. Side by side with the sins of German separatism we must place the encouragement and protection afforded to the intellectual life of Germany by the Princes and the cities. The Court of the Muses at Weimar achieved the highest in this respect, but it by no means stood alone.

The history of most of the non-Prussian States is connected with the name of some one or other of the men of Science and of Art who have helped to raise the magnificent edifice of our intellectual life. When Prussia woke to a consciousness of her duties with regard to the spiritual achievements of Germany, in those terrible but yet splendid years when, as Frederick William III. so well expressed it, the Prussian State must make good by its intellectual powers what it had lost physically. German intellect had already reached its zenith without the help of Prussia. German intellectual life, which the whole world has learned to admire, and which even the first Napoleon respected, is predominantly the work of the South and West, achieved under the protection of her Princes, small States, and free cities.

But the people who lived on the sandy soil of the

## Prussian Culture

Mark, in the plains east of the Elbe and the Oder, so scantily favoured by Nature, during the centuries which witnessed the growth of German culture in other parts of the country, prepared the future of Germany as a State in battles and privations under the rule of heroic and politic Kings.

German intellect was developed in the West and the South, the German State in Prussia. The Princes of the West were the patrons of German culture; the Hohenzollern were the political teachers and task-masters.

It took a long time before the importance of Prussia, in which even Goethe only loved her great King, was recognised in Germany; before it was realised that this rude and thoroughly prosaic State of soldiers and officials, without many words but with deeds that were all the greater, was performing a task of enormous importance in the work of German civilisation: preparing the political culture of the German nation. Prussia became for Germany what Rome was for the ancient world. Leopold von Ranke, intellectually the most universal and at the same time the most Prussian of German historians, says, in his "History of the World," that it was the task of antiquity to permeate the Greek spirit with the Roman. Classical culture, in which the intellectual life of Western Europe is rooted, was preserved by the Roman State, which, with its legal and military foundation, gave to the ancient world its political shape. The Prussian State became the guardian of German intellectual life, by giving to the German people a united State and a position on a level with the great Empires of the world.

## Imperial Germany

Through the foundation of the Empire we acquired national life as a State. In so doing our political development embarked on a new and a safe course. But it has not yet reached its goal. Our task has been begun but is by no means yet completed.

We must secure and cement the unity of our intellectual and political life by the fusion of the Prussian and the German spirit. [That is what I meant when, not long before my retirement, I said in the Reichstag, with reference to the fact that in the death chamber of Prince Bismarck the only ornament I noticed on the wall was the portrait of Ludwig Uhland, that this juxtaposition summed up all German history, for only the union between the energy and discipline of old Prussian Conservatism and the magnanimous spirit of German Liberalism could ensure a happy future for the nation. A century ago Fichte challenged the nation to overcome the difference between thought and being within itself, and thus consciously to create itself; this challenge is also addressed to us.] Prussian State life and German intellectual life must become reconciled in such a way that both their growths become intertwined without weakening each other.

Such a reconciliation had not quite been achieved before the great war in which we are now engaged. The representative of German intellectual life was still sometimes inclined to regard the Prussian State as a hostile power, and the old Prussian at times to regard the free and untrammelled development of German intellect as a destructive force. And again and again in Parliament and in the Press accusations were levelled [in the name of freedom against

## State Differences

Prussia, and in the name of order against the undauntable German intellect, which in its breadth, its philosophic depth and its poetic charm has never been equalled since the days of the Greeks.]

My late friend, Adolph Wilbrandt, in a pleasing play, has a scene between an official belonging to the North German nobility and the daughter of a savant of the middle classes. At first they repel each other and quarrel. "I represent the Germany of Schiller, Goethe and Lessing," says the woman, and the man replies: "And I represent the Germany of Bismarck, Blücher and Moltke." We often hear similar things from the lips of clever and serious men. Our [intellectual and political] future depends on whether, and to what extent, we succeed in amalgamating German intellect with the Prussian monarchy.

It is quite true that in many cases in non-Prussian Germany, owing to other political traditions, conceptions of State rule and freedom prevail that are fundamentally different from those that have sprung from the soil of Prussian traditions. This distinction is found, not only in party differences, but in the parties themselves. In the South of Germany there is a tendency to slacken the reins of political powers below, in Prussia a tendency to tighten them from above. In the former case a conception of political life more from the intellectual standpoint; in the latter more from the standpoint of the State. Each of them is the result of historical growth and is justified in its peculiarity. The Prussian does wrong if he refuses to see anything but destructive democracy in the political life of South Germany: the South German is equally

## **Imperial Germany**

wrong if he exclaims in horror at the antiquated politics of Prussian State life.

Progress in political life is a very fluid idea, and in what direction of political development true progress will lie is more than all the wise men of the world can tell. [The fulfilment of Conservative demands has often, from the historical point of view, denoted real progress in the best sense of the word; whereas when looked upon with the appraising eye of history, Democratic and Liberal demands sometimes appear definitely reactionary.] Each State, each nation tries to advance and to perfect its political institutions according to its own way of thinking.

We Germans, who for historical reasons have not a uniform but a manifold political life, are the last nation in the world that can afford to indulge in abstract political principles, either such as are derived only from Prussian or such as are derived only from South German traditions, and to fit all politics to these principles. It is our task to conduct political development in Prussia, the individual States and the Empire in such a way that in each member of the Empire those forces are preserved which tend to make it most valuable to the Fatherland in general. Harmony of German life in all its parts must be attained, not so much by making all institutions in the north, south, east and west uniform, as in smoothing the differences that still exist.

Bismarck's foundation of the Empire was not least masterly in that it created a firm bond of union, while at the same time it did not destroy the peculiarities and the independence of the individual States; and also in that it not only nominally, but actually, made

## Separatist Tendencies

Prussia the leading State by preserving the monarchic principle in the new Empire.

The union of Germany that the patriotic Democrats conceived in the 'forties of the nineteenth century was to do away with the independence of the Federal States, more or less, and to vest the unifying power in the paramount influence of an Imperial Parliament. Apart from the fact that the German Princes would never have consented to such a union, it was a mistake in a thoroughly monarchic country like Germany to expect unifying power from parliamentary life which, so far from having been tested, had not even come into existence.

That in a common representative assembly of the German people the forces tend rather to separate than to unite in the idea of the Empire and in great national tasks, has been amply proved by the struggles between the Imperial Government and the parties in the Reichstag during the years which have passed since the founding of the Empire.

Bismarck, the Prussian, realised better than anyone else that in Germany strong government could only be based and maintained on the monarchic principle. The work of union could only be permanent if the monarchy was not a purely ornamental part of the fabric of the Empire, but was made to be the actual support of the union.

And if the creative power of Prussian monarchy, well tested in the course of centuries, was to be enlisted in the interests of the new Empire, then the King of Prussia must, as German Emperor, be more than the bearer of shadowy dignities; he must rule and guide—

## **Imperial Germany**

and for this purpose must actually possess monarchic rights such as have been laid down and transcribed in the Constitution of the Empire.

Germany would never, or at best very slowly and imperfectly, have achieved union as a State by following the paths of democracy along which other nations have reached the goal of national development. As a monarchy, with the Federal Princes represented in the Federal Council, and the King of Prussia at the head, we have become a united German Empire. Had we been entrusted entirely to the care of quarrelling parties in Parliament, the idea of the Empire would never have gained so much ground, would never have been able to win the heart of Germans to such an extent as is actually the case since the unity of the Empire was placed under the protection of the monarchy.

At the beginning of the 'sixties in the nineteenth century, Crispi, later President of the Ministry in Italy, wrote to Mazzini that he had been converted from the Republic to the Monarchy, because the latter would unite Italy, whereas the former would disintegrate her : the same applies to us. And it is particularly true in our case because the German Empire, situated in the middle of Europe, insufficiently protected by Nature on its frontiers, [and surrounded by great military powers,] is and must remain a military State. And in history strong military States have always required monarchic guidance.

[We have seen that at the moment when Germany's existence was seriously threatened on the outbreak of war, all hearts turned spontaneously to our Imperial leader, all faith and confidence were placed in him.

## A Strong Monarchy

The whole German people expressed its devoted patriotism and loyalty to the State by an unpremeditated and instinctive manifestation of monarchic feeling. And during the whole course of these terrible struggles on all fronts and in all climes Germany has realised with satisfaction that, thanks to monarchic leadership, in the war she is superior to her opponents in her readiness to strike promptly and in the uniformity of her military action.]

A strong monarchy at the head of affairs by no means precludes a lively interest on the part of the people in the political life of the Empire and the individual States. On the contrary, the more keen and intelligent the interest that all classes of the nation take in the development of political matters, the closer will grow the ties between the people and the monarchy, which as leader and guide stands at the head of national life. Political life in a modern monarchy, as created by our Constitution, entails co-operation between the Crown and the people.

It is an old mistake to want to gauge the concern of the nation in political affairs solely by the rights granted to the representatives of the people. A Parliament may possess very extensive rights and yet the nation may take very little interest in politics. Thus in France formerly, Parliament was sometimes all-powerful, whereas the people were indifferent. The relatively large measure of constitutional rights which the Reichstag and the Diets in Germany enjoy might be accompanied by far keener political interest and far deeper political understanding on the part of the nation, than has hitherto been the case. The so-called

## Imperial Germany

"politification of the people" is a matter of political education, not a question of parliamentary power.

The statement uttered from time to time, that my idea was to change the distribution of power between the Crown and the Parliament in favour of the latter, that is, to introduce parliamentary government in the West European sense of the words, belongs to the thickly populated realm of political fables. In my eyes the dividing line between the rights of the Crown and of Parliament was immutably fixed. In foreign as well as in home politics I considered it my noblest task, to the best of my understanding and ability, to strengthen, support and protect the Crown, not only on account of deep loyalty and personal affection for the wearer, but also because I see in the Crown the corner-stone of Prussia and the keystone of the Empire.

What we Germans need cannot be attained by alterations in the sphere of constitutional law. The parties which would acquire greater rights, to a large extent still lack political judgment, political training and consciousness of the aims of the State. In Germany a large number of educated people, who ought to play a leading part in party life, still adopt an attitude of indifference, if not of dislike towards politics. Very clever men often assert with a certain pride that they understand nothing and wish to know nothing of politics. The ignorance which prevails in regard to the most elementary matters of government is often astounding.

Those times are past when it was of no concern to the welfare of the State whether the nation did or did not understand the laws under which it lived. Legis-

## Class Duties

lation no longer lies exclusively in the hands of specially trained and experienced officials; Parliament co-operates in the task. But the work of the factions is even now carried out much as the work of the officials alone used to be formerly: to the accompaniment of a complete lack of understanding and judgment on the part of large sections of the community. In connection with economic questions, it is true groups that are interested in agriculture, commerce and industry display a certain amount of activity, as do associations formed for special purposes when matters connected with these special purposes are in question; for the most part, however, it may be said that the dictum of the members of Parliament is accepted quite passively by the "beschränkten Untertanenverstand" (limited understanding of the subject). But, as soon as the tangible effects are felt, bitter criticism is heard, which, however, is limited to the individual case and does not result in any stimulation of political understanding.

What we Germans lack is active interest in the course of political affairs, interest that is not only aroused at elections which take place at considerable intervals, but that is concerned with all the great and small questions of political life. It is the duty of the educated classes to take this political education in hand—the duty of the intellectual leaders, whom the Germans follow more readily than does any other nation. It is their duty to enliven public spirit and to interweave the interest and the activity of the greatest possible number of classes with the demands of the State. The indolent indifference towards political life of men who are æsthetically and intellectually sensitive is now out of place.

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<sup>1</sup>[It is out of place with regard to home politics, and much more so as far as the great incidents of foreign politics are concerned. For a comparatively small number of Germans, so-called greater politics have become a sort of hobby, but for the vast majority of the nation they are *terra incognita*. So far as opinions on the life of nations have been formed at all, partly they have emanated from party-political views, partly they were conclusions drawn from the abstract, scientific dogmas and conceptions, and for the rest they were based on sentiments and moral consciousness. The tendency to pursue a foreign policy determined by sympathies and antipathies, love or hatred, in accordance with middle-class notions of morality, preconceived ideas or abstract conceptions, is nowhere so strongly developed as amongst us.

Not long after the declaration of the Rights of Man the French Jacobins showed an inclination towards theoretic politics and dogmatism, but Abbé Sieyès checked these propensities with the remark : " *Les principes sont bons pour l'école, les états se gouvernent selon leurs intérêts.*" <sup>2</sup> We continually run the risk of judging events abroad by our feelings instead of by our intelligence. Our lack of psychological insight is not unconnected with this. He who judges everything from the point of view of his own feelings will have difficulty in penetrating the mentality of others. The difficulty we experience in understanding other people's way of thinking, and in taking this into account, is

<sup>1</sup> New matter from here to end.

<sup>2</sup> Principles are all very well for schools, states are governed in accordance with their interests.

## Why Bismarck Excelled

to a far greater extent than many other things that have been suggested the real reason for our unpopularity abroad, which we have so often, indeed too often, discussed.

Prince Bismarck was a past master in the art of handling men and nations; but then he thoroughly understood the foreign diplomatists and sovereigns, his opponents in the game, and foreign nations as well—partly owing to personal acquaintance with them and to sojourning abroad, but even more by means of his marvellous intuition; he comprehended not only things and facts, but also men; he read their feelings, their mental and emotional processes and saw deep into their hearts. Just as an experienced angler has the right bait at hand for every fish, so he knew how to handle and lead men and nations according to their characters. I have often heard him say: "Diplomacy means working in human material." Bismarck was rarely mistaken in his estimate of the effects of his own actions or of the consequent reaction on the part of others, and he mostly foresaw the course of events with accuracy. He never made the mistake of assuming a didactic tone towards foreign nations, and when he discussed foreign conditions it was with an intimate knowledge of foreign mentality and only in cases where he could exactly foretell the effect of his words.

Where such preliminary conditions are lacking a man merely lays himself open to ridicule if he worries about other folk's affairs and wants to enlighten them on their own interests. Like every man, every nation considers itself the best judge of its own interests; and no one cares to take an enemy's advice—at the very

## Imperial Germany

most, guessing the intention, one adopts the opposite course to that urged by one's opponent. Moreover, little is gained in international affairs by moralising and preaching. "What is the good," an experienced man once said to me, "of preaching to a lion on the wholesomeness of vegetable food? He will still continue to have an appetite for blood. It is better to kill the lion, or anyway to cut his claws."

We should not recommend our Kultur (civilisation) to others too often or too emphatically. The better course for us is calmly to declare that we Germans are striving to make our own country securer and stronger and not to proclaim ourselves the leaders of civilisation, for the whole world fears such a hegemony more even than political supremacy. Further, this war turns upon political and economic problems of tremendous importance and range, upon the solution of which the welfare of our people will depend for generations to come; but it does not, properly speaking, turn upon questions of civilisation at all. The best kind of propaganda for German civilisation and the right way to protect it, to develop it and to spread it, is to keep our intellectual life free from impure foreign influences which are hurtful to it. What German genius was so successful in conquering and mastering the world as Richard Wagner? And no one bowed down less than he did to all that is foreign to the German genius. It is sad to remember how soon after the glorious war of 1870-71 Sardou, Dumas, Augier and other mediocrities were played upon our stage much oftener than Otto Ludwig, Hebbel and Grillparzer; and it is painful to recall to what extent shallow

## The Tide of Hatred

foreign concoctions pushed the German Muse into the background up to the outbreak of war. The thanks we have received from those very foreign poets, writers and artists whom we acclaimed the most, may teach us to show more dignity and good taste in this respect in future. In all things, in the realm of art as in the field of politics, we attach far too much importance to the judgment of foreign countries. Bismarck had studied foreign lands with greater success than anyone else; he knew how to treat them, how to impress them, both men and nations; but he was careful never to be caught himself.

The higher the tide of hatred and rage, of injustice and envy, rises during this war and because of this war, the less will we allow ourselves to be deterred from pursuing our aims, or to be diverted from them. In future let us not forget what a very small part gratitude plays in politics. In the life of nations a debt of gratitude, in that it hurts national pride, is more apt to lead to silent wrath than to true friendship. The wise founder of the Constitution of the United States, George Washington, told his fellow-countrymen that there was no more grievous error than to think that nations can act magnanimously and unselfishly toward each other.

We must also be clear on the point that in politics it is not right alone that decides. Pitt, the greatest English statesman, said that the might of no realm would endure for longer than from sunrise to sunset if absolute justice were to prevail. It was a Frenchman, Pascal, who said that right without might is powerless, and might is mistress of the world. If right decided things, the world would have looked very different for

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the past three thousand years, and the German people would not have had to undergo such suffering as they were exposed to in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and up to the middle of the nineteenth century.

Stress must be laid, however, upon the fact that it would be a gross mistake to confound a clear and robust practical policy with a misapprehension of the imponderables. Nothing is less in accordance with practical policy in the true sense of the word, or with a Bismarckian policy, than to overlook the importance of imponderables. We can learn from French, English and Russian history how largely our neighbours have been guided in their policy by their interests, their wish for power and their keen desire for mastery, both political and economic. But we can also learn from the history of our neighbours how clever they were on the banks of the Seine, of the Thames, and even of the Neva, at cloaking practical motives and instincts in high sounding words which make them seem beautiful. As the wise Greek said, men are moved not so much by things as by their views on things, and it is often not truth but the semblance of truth which rules the world.

The man who pursues a practical policy knows better than anyone else what an important factor feeling is in the life of the nation, what weight imponderable things have, which, as Prince Bismarck said on February 6, 1888, weigh far, far more heavily than material objects. A clumsy word, a thoughtless phrase, can do more harm at times than defeat in battle. It is a question whether ill-chosen words cannot do more damage than

## Principles are Mischievous

imprudent writings or even deeds, whether the Latin dictum, "*Verba volant, scripta manent*," might not more properly be reversed. The expression "*cœur léger*," which Emile Ollivier allowed to escape his lips in 1870 at the beginning of the war, straightway labelled the war for millions of people in the world, and the impression created by them persisted for many years.

In practical politics and in the administration of affairs dogmatic adherence to principles and unpractical theories are mischievous. Ernest Renan, himself a philosopher, rightly said that philosophy had as little connection with politics as with mechanics or chemistry. The principles of practical politics must be applied in a practical manner, they must not be proclaimed from the housetops in the form of an extreme theory. Otherwise we shall cover Germany with odium, with an evil repute which our noble people assuredly do not deserve, for we have for centuries actually pursued a policy which is essentially more humane, and in the best sense of the word more idealistic, than France from the times of Philip the Fair, Henry IV. and Richelieu to those of Napoleon; than Russia from the days of Peter the Great and Catherine to the present time; than England in all her history.

Owing to our seriousness and our logic, owing also to our thoroughness, which at times becomes clumsiness, many a thing sounds cruder on German lips, and is more offensive when expressed in German fashion, than if it had been uttered by others. Pascal, probably the deepest French thinker, discriminated between the *esprit géométrique* and the *esprit de finesse*. The

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former causes much mischief in politics, the latter prevents many things and achieves some.

The outbreak of war was calculated to force the German nation with sudden violence to realise how greatly the course of foreign politics affects the fate of every German, and that questions of greater politics are like dynamite cartridges which, if they are clumsily handled anywhere in the world, may produce terrible explosions; it was calculated to show us how urgent is the necessity for cool judgment and sensible determination where the web of international relations is concerned in which our national life, in its entirety and in its details, is entangled; how indispensable, in dealing with these relations, are experience, knowledge of men and things, psychological insight and the right estimation of others which it enables us to form; how desirable is that quality which the Frenchman describes by the untranslatable expression "*le doigté*," which Prince Bismarck demanded of everyone who had anything to do with foreign and diplomatic affairs. It depends upon the lever of the pointsman whether two railway trains pass one another or collide with fearful violence.

Politics, as Prince Bismarck often said, is an art. Hence goodwill, which in matters of morality is everything, is of little or no account, and ability is the only thing that tells. A short time ago in the Reichstag a deputy opined very truly that all the misfortunes in the world arose from goodwill, coupled with incapacity. We need a skilfully conducted foreign policy all the more because we are situated in the middle of Europe, wedged in between races hostile to us, and

## After the War

must always reckon with the possibility of attack. We have been encircled for a thousand years, ever since by the Treaty of Verdun the German tribes of Charles the Great were separated from the others and started life as an independent State under the Carolingian king named Ludwig the German. Hemmed in by Latins and Slavs, we must suit our foreign policy to our geographical position.

The present, which is full of great and serious political problems, and still more so the future after the war, require a political generation. It is Germany's great hope that men of political insight will some day return home from the fiery ordeal by which their souls are tried in this gigantic struggle among the nations. Great-hearted men who will not let their considered judgment on practical questions of home politics be crippled by the pressure of the doctrines of party politics, strong-willed men who will demand of the Government as well a determined policy with great aims, which shall be energetically carried out.

When from the bloody seed of this world war we shall reap the increased glory of the German Empire, the important point will be to concentrate the wealth of German intellect, the indestructible German capacity for work, the unwearied German energy upon the interrupted task of German progress. Fighting so tenaciously for more than eighteen months of warfare, the mighty powers and means at Germany's disposal have with invincible might and unshakable confidence in victory, mastered, and with God's help will continue to master the monstrous fate which overtook us so unexpectedly. These powers were fostered and grew during

## Imperial Germany

forty-five years of work in times of peace—work which was restless, sometimes sombre and sullen, much debated, but always unwearied, steadfast and fruitful. This war was the tremendous test of the strength of the edifice erected in peace. Germany has stood the test. In April, 1813, Gneisenau, a great man at that time, wrote : “Prussia will never again be subjugated, for the whole nation participates in the struggle; it has developed a greatness of character which makes it invincible.” What was true of Prussia at that time is true of Germany to-day.

Less than half a century of peaceful progress along the new path of history, into which Bismarck’s strong hand had guided them, was vouchsafed to the German people. The German Empire, whose forces were welded together on battlefields, must now fight innumerable battles against a world of foes; and the German nation has met the threat of ruin with the determination to wrest from the struggle a glorious peace which shall clear and prepare the way to a brilliant future in international politics. It was Germany’s hope and Germany’s desire to strengthen and develop her position among the nations of the world by peaceful work and competition. But it has ever been the fate of the German people, as it is at the present time, to fulfil its own destiny, and hence its destiny in the history of the world, by treading a thorny path.

Our nation has never quarrelled with its fate, nor does it do so now. With wonderful unanimity and determination it shows the world that its will, its might, its courage rise superior to history and to destiny. It hopes and believes that these qualities, which no nation

## Rewards of Peace

has ever displayed with such deep and unswerving faith in God, such pure hearts, such simple acquiescence, with never-failing devotion and with such unanimity, will surely get its due reward : a peace worthy of such deeds and sacrifices, worthy of our past, a serious, real and secure guarantee for our future.

It betokens an unscientific and unpractical mode of thought to assume that after this world war an era will dawn, which in its broad outlines as in its details is diametrically opposed to the past decades before the war, an era that will break with traditions and earlier development, instead of carrying them on. We are well aware of this. We cannot even desire it, for it is steady organic evolution, and not sudden change, which ensures sound growth. Taine, as the result of his life-long study of the French Revolution, came to the conclusion that, "*En fait d'histoire il vaut mieux continuer que recommencer.*"<sup>1</sup> We do, however, hope that the purifying, clarifying and civilising influence of the war, which we have seen at work in the course of the war, will continue to act on the intellectual and public life of Germany after it is over, on the nation in general, and in detail on the Government and the parties. But experience teaches us that, however great the events, however heavy the blows of fate, neither men nor circumstances change suddenly or become the contrary of what they were before—especially not in Germany. Even the tremendous change betokened by the transition from Germany of the period of the Federated Diet, of the worthy small folk, to Germany, the new Empire and

<sup>1</sup> Where history is concerned, it is better to continue than to begin afresh.

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Great Power, left untouched the nature of the German, the roots of our character and the fundamental conditions of our existence.

The number of problems a nation has solved is always small compared with the number that awaits solution. That was Germany's experience after the wars of liberation and the wars of union. The German nation knows it to-day too. It knows that Goethe depicted the German nation in human guise, not in Wagner, who is filled with satisfaction by the contemplation of all the fine things we have at last achieved, but in Faust who, with high self-confidence, ever strives to achieve more, and who gives utterance to this truth as the ultimate conclusion of wisdom : "*Nur der verdient sich Freiheit wie das Leben, Der täglich sie erobern muss.*"<sup>1</sup>

May the consideration of the welfare of the country in Germany always prove stronger than party interests and the claims of special groups. May every German be ever conscious of the duties which two thousand years of history have imposed on us, a history which led us through the stormy times of the *Völkerwanderung* (migration of nations), by way of Charles the Great and Frederick Barbarossa, by way of Fehrbellin and Leuthen, Leipzig and Waterloo, Königgratz and Sedan. May every German at all times be ready to defend the Fatherland, may every German heart for all time subscribe to the sacred vow : *Deutschland über alles!*]

<sup>1</sup> He alone deserves liberty and life who must conquer them daily anew.

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